SUFFERING AND THE PROPHETIC VOCATION

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Suffering and the Prophetic Vocation

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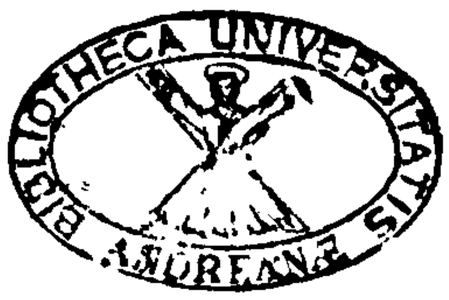

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To

the Session

and all of God's People

at

University Presbyterian Church,

Seattle, Washington, USA,

with deepest gratitude.

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CERTIFICATION

I certify that Stephen Allen Hayner has fulfilled the conditions of the Resolution of the University Court, 1967, No. 1 (as amended), and is qualified to submit this thesis in application for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

[redacted]

Principal William McKane

DECLARATION

I was admitted as a research student under Ordinance 350 (General No. 12) on 1 January 1978, and as a candidate for the degree of Ph.D. under Resolution of the University Court, 1967, No. 1 (as amended) on 22 November 1978.

The following thesis is based on the results of research carried out by myself, is my own composition, and has not previously been presented for a higher degree. The research was carried out in the University of St. Andrews under the supervision of Professor William McKane.

Stephen A. Hayner

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PREFACE

The struggle to understand and to respond to God's call is a persistent reality of life among those whose greatest desire is obedience to their Creator. But frequently, even when the path seems to be clearly marked, the way of obedience is accompanied by challenges, disappointments, doubts, unfulfilled expectations, persecutions, and tragedy. God's people are never immune to the exigencies of life.

Although scholarly in its tone, this research represents one attempt to enter into the way of obedience which was required of Jeremiah, to the end that through observation of his struggle with vocation, we too might understand something of the deeper meaning of the pain which may accompany our own pilgrimages.

I am indebted to the Session and people of the University Presbyterian Church in Seattle, Washington, for releasing me from my pastoral duties for extended periods of time and for encouraging me continually over the last six years so that this research could be pursued. In addition, I am most grateful for the faithful service of the seminary interns (Mark Labberton, Marta Bennett, Annette Moser, James B. Notkin, Mike Graef, and Gretchen Ford Covey) who at various points during my absence have so ably continued the ministry to University students for which I have been given responsibility.

Graduate research is carried on for the purpose of educating the researchers as well as for making a contribution to human understanding. The education process, which in itself may be one of those painful paths of obedience, may be greatly enhanced (or hindered) by those instructors who guide us as fledgling scholars. In the inevitable comparison of my experience as a research student with that of many of my friends in Great Britain and the U.S.A., I can confidently assert that the education, encouragement, and support which I have received from Prof. William McKane and the staff of the Hebrew and Old Testament Department here at St. Mary's College has been second to none. I have especially appreciated the constant emphasis on detailed exegesis and the development of "good judgment," which seems to be among the most elusive of those qualities which make a good scholar.

Finally, I want to express my thanks to the Rev. Bruce and Hazel Larson who have been a constant source of strength during these last months as I have labored in the hermitage which they supplied me in their home, to my parents who have given me not only a love of learning but have often supplied the resources to enable the process, and to my wife, Sharol, and our children who have patiently endured and powerfully loved me during the worst as well as the best parts of these last few years.

ABSTRACT

The "self-disclosures" in Jeremiah, including not only the so-called "confessions" but also other first person material which seems to express the prophet's inner feelings, are examined in a detailed, exegetical fashion with careful attention to both the ancient versions and the subsequent history of exegesis. Special attention is given to the works of Rashi and Kimchi. Three basic questions are asked: 1) What do the "self-disclosures" represent? 2) To what degree can the "self-disclosures" be said to portray the historical Jeremiah? 3) Why are the "self-disclosures" included in the corpus of Jeremianic literature?

These questions are approached by examining the relevant passages against the backdrop of the prophetic orthodoxy of the late 7th century B.C., which is seen to consist of commonly held notions of the role, message, and perhaps even temperament of the prophet within the current socio-religious framework. This orthodoxy is viewed as having initially defined Jeremiah's understanding of the prophetic office. But in the "self-disclosures," Jeremiah wrestles with the other side of his experience as a prophet,

the painful and mysterious side, and attempts to forge a new understanding of the prophetic vocation.

In the end, the fundamental element of the prophetic vocation for Jeremiah is seen as the "Word of the Lord." The prophet's conviction that he had been entrusted with the powerful, efficacious "Word" became the touchstone of both his vocational self-understanding and his authentication against the false prophets who represented prophetic orthodoxy. And the "Word" was ultimately the source of his suffering. All of these elements may be seen in the call-narrative which is examined in detail as the introduction to the entire book.

The closing chapter of the thesis takes a closer look at the theological kerygma of the "self-disclosures," particularly in relation to the problem of suffering.

ABBREVIATIONS

ABR	**Australian Biblical Review** Melbourne, Australia
AEccR	**American Ecclesiastical Review**
AJSLL	**The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature** Chicago
ANQ	**Andover Newton Quarterly** Newton Centre, Mass.: Andover-Newton Theol. School
ASR	**American Sociological Review**
ATR	**Anglican Theological Review** Evanston, Illinois
AV	**Authorized Version**
BDB	Brown, Driver, & Briggs, **A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament**
BETS	**Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society**
BH	Biblical Hebrew
BHS	**Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia** Ed. K. Elliger and W. Rudolph
BHK	**Biblia Hebraica** Ed. Rudolf Kittel
Bib	**Biblica** Rome: Biblical Institute Press
BibTdy	**The Bible Today**
BJRL	**Bulletin of the John Rylands Univ. Library of Manchester**
BLit	**Bibel und Liturgie** Klosterneuburg, Austria: Osterr. Katholisches Bibelwerk
BTB	**Biblical Theology Bulletin** Albany, New York
BZAW	**Beihefte zur Zeitschrift fur die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft**
CBQ	**Catholic Biblical Quarterly** Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Assoc.

CQR	Church Quarterly Review
CR	Clergy Review London: Heythrop College
CRDSB	Colgate Rochester Divinity School Bulletin
EBB	Elenchus Bibliographicus Biblicus Rome
EstBib	Estudios Biblicos Barcelona, Spain: Fac. de Teol.
ETL	Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses
ETR	Etudes Théologiques et Religieuses Montpellier, France
EvQ	The Evangelical Quarterly Buxton, Derbyshire
EvTh	Evangelische Theologie Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag
ExpTim	The Expository Times Banstead, Surrey
HR	E. Hatch & H. Redpath, A Concordance to the Septuagint
HTR	Harvard Theological Review Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press
HUCA	Hebrew Union College Annual Cincinatti, Ohio
IKZ	Internationale Katholische Zeitschrift Koln, Germany
Int	Interpretation Richmond, Virginia: Union Theological Seminary
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature Claremont, California
JBR	Journal of Bible and Religion
JJS	Journal of Jewish Studies Oxford: The Oriental Institute
JNES	Journal of Near Eastern Studies Chicago: Univ. of Chicago
JQR	The Jewish Quarterly Review Philadelphia
JR	Journal of Religion
JSOT	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Sheffield: Biblical Studies, The University

JSS	**Journal of Semitic Studies** Manchester: The University of Manchester
JTS	**Journal of Theological Studies**
KB	L. Koehler & W. Baumgartner, **Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros**
LSJ	H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, **A Greek-English Lexicon**, rev. by H. S. Jones
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text
NEB	**New English Bible**
NIV	**New International Version** New York International Bible Society
NKZ	**Neue kirckliche Zeitschrift**
OT	Old Testament
OTA	**Old Testament Abstracts** Washington, DC: Catholic Bib. Assoc. of America
OTS	**Oudtestamentische Studien**
Pesh.	Peshitta
RevExp	**Review and Expositor** Louisville: Southern Baptist Theological Sem.
RGG	**Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart**
RSR	**Recherches de Science Religieuse** Paris
RSV	**Revised Standard Version** National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.
SEA	**Svensk Exegetisk Årsbok** Uppsala, Sweden
SJTh	**Scottish Journal of Theology** Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press
StAn	**Studium Anselmianum**
Targ.	Targum (generally Targum Pseudo-Jonathan in reference to texts from Jeremiah)
TD	**Theology Digest** St. Louis, Missouri

TLZ	**Theologische Literaturzeitung** Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt
TRu	**Theologische Rundschau** Tubingen: J. C. Mohr
TToday	**Theology Today** Princeton, New Jersey
TynBull	**Tyndale Bulletin**
TZ	**Theologische Zeitschrift** Basel: Verlag Friedrich Reinhardt
USQR	**Union Seminary Quarterly Review** New York: Union Theological Seminary
VR	**Vox Reformata** Victoria, Australia
VSpir	**La Vie Spirituelle** Paris: Editions du Cerf
vss.	verses
vs.	verse
VT	**Vetus Testamentum** Leiden: E. J. Brill
Vulg.	Vulgate
WMANT	**Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament** Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag
ZAW	**Zeitschrift fur die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft** Berlin: Walter de Gruyter
ZTK	**Zeitschrift fur Theologie und Kirche**

INTRODUCTION: VOCATION AND SELF-DISCLOSURE IN JEREMIAH

Throughout the history of exegesis, the Book of Jeremiah has intrigued commentators due to the quantity and intensity of the prophet's apparent self-disclosures. Most often, attention has been focused on the so-called "confessions," delimited (with variations among the commentators) as Jer. xi 18-23; xii 1-6; xv 10-21; xvii 12-18; xviii 18-23; xx 7-13; and xx 14-18. But this is certainly not all the material which seems to reveal the reactions of the prophet, even reading at the most superficial level. The text abounds with what appear to be statements of sorrow, anger, incredulity, remorse, suffering, bitterness, despair, and many other emotions. Some commentators, in evaluating and interpreting this material, have attempted to lay bare the innermost thoughts and motivations of the prophet. Others have focused primarily on the historical aspects, attempting to reconstruct a firm chronological sequence for Jeremiah from this material in connection with the unusually long "biographical" sections and the considerable number of dates. Still others have tried to understand the meaning of the unique self-disclosures within the history of Israelite religion. In the last century, the scholarly appraisal of Jeremiah has been particularly diverse. It has included not

only the highpoint of what might be called the "psycho-biographical" approach to the prophet in John Skinner's Prophecy and Religion, but also the works of such scholars as Reventlow and Gerstenberg, who, for very different reasons, have denied that the Book of Jeremiah reflects much at all about the personal life of the prophet. The "search for the historical Jeremiah," patterned in many ways after the hermeneutical struggle to unravel the "life of Jesus," is now in full-swing and is likely to escalate as the issues are clarified and the research continues.[1]

In this study, I have attempted to make a detailed examination of the "self-disclosures" in response to three basic questions which relate to our understanding of the historical Jeremiah and the book which bears his name: 1) What do the "self-disclosures" represent? 2) To what degree can the "self-disclosures" be said to portray the historical Jeremiah? 3) Why are the "self-disclosures" included in the corpus of Jeremianic literature? In brief, my thesis is that the "self-disclosures," which are largely portrayals of the intense and multifarious suffering of an individual, do indeed represent authentic expressions of a unique, historical prophet. As such, they chronicle Jeremiah's attempt to understand the nature of his prophetic vocation. Initially his vocational expectations had been established against the backdrop of a "prophetic orthodoxy"--a socio-religious understanding of the role of the prophet--which he had inherited as one nurtured in the late 7th century and

called to prophesy to a people who honored those who conformed to the orthodox pattern. But the self-disclosures offer the primary indication of the utter failure of the prophetic orthodoxy to give direction and understanding to Jeremiah's experience within his own prophetic call. Jeremiah was convinced that he had been called by God to prophesy. He thought he knew what that calling would entail. But his experience, which did not conform to his expectation, forced him to reevaluate his initial call, his view of God, and the nature of his life as a prophet. The self-disclosures were included in the corpus of Jeremianic literature because they offered a marked departure from the orthodox view. Jeremiah knew the need for the corrective early in his ministry, and the people of the exile eventually knew it, too.

The "Self-Disclosures" and the Commentators

In order to establish the relationship between this study and those which have preceded it, it is necessary to review something of the dialogue among the scholars of the last hundred years with regard to the "self-disclosures" in the Book of Jeremiah. One way to approach the issues is in relation to the questions which I have already posed.

I. What do the "self-disclosures" in the Book of Jeremiah represent? Traditional interpretation of these passages generally assumed that they represented personal expressions of the prophet which illustrated the advancement

of personal piety within Israelite prophetism. They reflected the actual comments and feelings of the prophet Jeremiah. In the older literature, the question of the relationship between the man, Jeremiah, and the words of the book is understood to be direct. Heinrich Ewald probably had the greatest influence on the commentators at the turn of the century in this regard.[2] For him, the dialogues (Zwiegespräch) were of central importance in the study of prophecy and were an indication that the highpoint of prophetism in Israel had passed.[3] Previously the individual personalities of the prophets had been subordinated to their mystical union with God, but in Jeremiah we are confronted with both the prophet and the man.[4] Ewald presumed that the dialogues with God continued throughout Jeremiah's ministry and that in them we can see the true prophet growing in his spirituality step by step. In his humanity, Jeremiah was tender, impressionable, retiring, diffident, and carried away by the feeling of the moment.[5] But the weakness of the man was complemented by the strength of the prophet who, when possessed with Yahweh's truth and spirit, fearlessly and energetically contended with the issues of his day.[6]

Wellhausen and Cornill also found the confessional materials to be quite important as a representation of a new direction in the history of prophecy. Wellhausen saw Jeremiah as the "father of true prayer," and viewed the confessions as the expression of both subhuman misery and superhuman confidence, of fear and doubt as well as

unswerving trust.[7] He saw Jeremiah's confessions as purely private statements never intended for publication. For Cornill Jeremiah's confessions were an indication that religion had finally been set free from extraneous and material elements and had moved to a more purely spiritual base.[8]

Other commentators through the first three decades of this century followed in this vein. Duhm pictured Jeremiah as the last great prophet, but more restrained, modest, and tender than Amos or Isaiah. He was a hero, not in his aggressive confrontation, but in his suffering, and he carefully observed and accurately recorded his emotional responses.[9] Buttenwieser suggested that any discussion of the faith of the prophets must finally center in Jeremiah's fervid record of his own experience.[10] The opinion of A. B. Davidson is typical of this era: "The book of Jeremiah does not so much teach religious truths as present a religious personality. Prophecy had already taught its truths, its last effort was to reveal itself in a life."[11] Even among many, like Baumgartner and Gunkel, who recognized in the confessions an older lament form which the prophet had accommodated to his own purposes, the confessions were still seen as a personal portrait of Jeremiah himself.[12] Gunkel believed that the prophet possessed a "zart angelegte Natur, viel zu weich für seinen furchtbaren Beruf."[13] In the English language, the work of John Skinner is the epitome of those works which saw the confessions as a psychological

portrait of the prophet. He perceived the prophet as reflecting on the personal metamorphasis which he was undergoing from a traditional view of prophecy to a new spiritual communion with God. True prophecy, as Skinner interpreted Jeremiah's experience, became ". . . the intuitive certainty of divine truth and the illumination of the whole conscious mind by the Spirit of God."[14] Jeremiah took the step from the formalism of external worship and the legalism of the national covenant to find God in the heart of the individual.[15] Whereas, the earlier commentators saw in the confessions a significant development in the nature of prophecy, Skinner also saw a marked development in the nature of true religion. Here was the transition point from the last of the prophets to the first of the psalmists. But the voice was still that of Jeremiah and the passages represented the prophet's own experience.

With the highly psychological and individualistic approach, which was evident in Jeremianic studies of this period, also came warnings from those scholars concerned about the bifurcation of the man Jeremiah from his office as prophet. These scholars emphasized that the confessions were more than an expression of the subjective and personal self-conscious being of the prophet. They must be viewed in relation to the functional role of the prophet as well. Von Rad, for example, protested against the view that the confessions were simply expressions of purely human religiosity. Rather, they were the prophet's witness to his

relationship to God, not only through his charisma, but through his Menschlichkeit. Jeremiah had become the mediator for his people in a new way, by carrying their whole distress on himself. They were present in his abysmal condition.[16] In later writings, von Rad backed away from understanding Jeremiah as a kind of "suffering servant," but he, nevertheless, continued to read the confessions as the struggle of a man with his vocation. "With Jeremiah, the man and the prophetic task part company; indeed, serious tensions threaten the whole of his calling as a prophet. As a result . . ., the prophetic calling as it had been known up to Jeremiah's own time entered upon a critical phase of its existence."[17] Herntrich posited a vital solidarity between the experience of the prophet and that of the people. The prophet is seen in the confessions as a sinner, exposed to the revilement and persecution of his foes, but also participating in God's grace. Jeremiah as a person, however, is not of primary interest, but rather the way in which his encounter with God mirrors that of the nation. His life is one of witness.[18] Similarly, Stoebe focused on the prophet as a representive partner with the people in their experience of judgment and helplessness and a partner with God in divine suffering. The confessions reflect his sense of estrangement because of this twofold solidarity. Were attention drawn to Jeremiah's personal piety, he would have been alienated from the people. Instead he could serve as their pastor (Seelsorger).[19] Unlike von Rad, Stoebe sees

no breakdown in the confessions between the prophetic commission and the human self-understanding. But again, the strong individualistic approach of Skinner is averted.

The roots of a very different approach to the confessions can actually be found intertwined with the work already mentioned. With the advent and widening application of the form-critical method, the confessions of Jeremiah again came under close scrutiny because of their unique character within the prophetic literature. In his inaugural dissertation at Halle in 1891, Campe reflected on the relationship between Jeremiah and the Psalms, but concluded that Jeremiah should be given priority.[20] As mentioned above, Gunkel and Baumgartner each studied at length the relationship between the confessions and the individual-lament form found in the Psalms. But both finally concluded that the form had been filled with prophetic content and that, therefore, the authenticity of these sections as the personal and individual expressions of the prophet should not be questioned.[21] Mowinckel was more cautious. Because of his detailed study of the cultic Sitz im Leben of the Psalms and the marked similarity of the confessions of Jeremiah, he warned other scholars against extracting psychological and biographical details from the confessions.[22] Other warnings against the psychological and individualistic approach based on a form critical evaluation became evident. Stamm proposed that the confessions were delivered in a cultic setting. Jeremiah utilized cultic

forms, filling them with the characteristic genius (Geist) of the prophetic office. Jeremiah's solidarity with the people is evident.[23] Weiser also maintained that, since the confessions employed liturgical forms and traditional images, they had to be interpreted in accordance with a cultic understanding of the passages.[24] For Weiser, however, this did not preclude learning something personal about the prophet from the passages.

It was left to Reventlow to demonstrate the more radical application of possible form-critical implications on the confessions of Jeremiah. Again, he did not doubt that the historical Jeremiah was connected with these passages, but he denied that the confessions represented any kind of personal testimony. "Personal testimonies in this [western] sense," he declared, "are not to be found in the Book of Jeremiah, at least not in those passages treated by us, where one usually seeks them--not even in the confessions, which rank as the outstanding source for such statements."[25] The forms used by Jeremiah indicated to Reventlow that the prophet should be viewed as a cultic functionary and that the use of the first person singular is to be interpreted according to the principle of "corporate personality."[26] The cultic ceremonies in the Temple where the "I" was a formal part of accepted liturgy is demonstrated in the Psalms. "The 'I' that appears there has passed over completely into the 'we', it is nothing other than representation and embodiment of the

community."[27] Reventlow goes far beyond the confessions in his discussion and re-interprets most of the passages which have traditionally been used to bolster the psycho-biographical view. The call narrative (Jer. i) becomes an ordination ceremony in the Temple.[28] The communal laments, which others had found to contain the cries of a sensitive soul, become liturgical prayers, the recitation of which is required by the prophet's intercessory office in the cultus.[29] No psychological, biographical, or historical details can be found in these passages.

Reventlow's application of form-critical methodology has produced a significant and helpful dialogue, not only into the understanding of the Jeremianic passages, but also into the application of form-criticism itself.[30] The major objections which I would raise to his work all relate to his ideological conceptualization of the form-critical methodology. Like any critical method, the limitations of form-criticism must be grasped if it is to be flexibly applied in a way which acknowledges both the typical and the unique in any given passage. Several objections should be noted.

First, there is an assumption in Reventlow's work that the forms of speech necessarily remain rooted in the institutional origins of that form. Hence, if forms typical of the cult can be found, then they are proof of the cultic function of the speech in question. This mode of reasoning was already rejected by Gunkel.[31] It simply cannot be

demonstrated among any corpus of literature that text-type (or form) remains attached to its original setting. Rather, form functions as a communication vehicle, which, once established within a particular cultural or institutional matrix, is readily detached to be used within a variety of dissimilar matrices. There is no objective evidence apart from form that could establish the setting of the Jeremianic discourses as within the cult. One might expect, for example, some reference to liturgical participation or even a Temple setting as in the case of Isaiah vi. But there is none.[32] On the contrary, there are ample indications that the prophet found himself to be often alone, not only in the content of his preaching, but socially isolated as well. This would not have been the case if he were a cultic functionary.

Second, there is a similar assumption in Reventlow that forms of speech consistently serve the same function. In other words, if a form originated as a part of a liturgy, it would subsequently always be attached to that liturgy. If this were true, we would also expect a consistent utilization of the form itself, since the form of a liturgy manifests even less variation than its content. But again, this is not the case in Jeremiah. Instead, Jeremiah employs the forms in a rather distinctive manner. At times he modifies the form to fit his own purpose (cf. Jer. xv 15-18; i 17-19), utilizing elements and vocabulary which are not associated elsewhere with the Gattung. In Jeremiah i 4-19,

he actually employs features of two unrelated Gattungen, namely that of the "call narrative" and the "salvation oracle."[33] Baumgartner in his early form-critical evaluation of the confessions had noted that, while they often followed the Psalm lament form, they were not without modification. The confessions could hardly be called classic lamentations.[34] Bright sees Reventlow's linguistic analysis of passages like Jer. xv 10-21 as unnecessarily forced in order to preserve the form which is expected if the passage is to fit into the liturgical context smoothly.[35] Reventlow denies the flexibility of the genre in Jeremiah. Westermann is closer to the target when he states: "In Jeremiah the motif of the lament is more . . . diversely developed than in any other prophet."[36]

A third objection to this application of the form-critical approach is that Reventlow fails to recognize the distinctive in the context of the conventional.[37] For example, there are numerous autobiographical details included in the confessions which would not appear in a community confession, and these are often corroborated by the narrative passages.[38] In Jer. xii 6, the phrase "For even your brothers and your own family--even they have betrayed you . . . " is undoubtedly a reference to Jeremiah's kin from Anathoth which are specifically designated elsewhere as among his persecuters (cf. xi 18-23). The כִּי, with which vs. 6 begins, indicates that the hardships predicted in vs. 5 will come as a result of

this persecution. Reventlow interprets xii 5 as a reference to the foe of the North and, thus, sees vs. 6 as a general reference.[39] But even if vs. 5 has a wider application, the meaning of vs. 6 seems clear and it is better viewed as a mistaken exegesis of the hardship of vs. 5 than as a corporate reference. Jeremiah xv 10-21 fits very smoothly into a personal experience. Reventlow reads it as a corporate expression, but it is difficult to understand vss. 16, 17 if they are not applied to a prophetic individual. Similarly, it is difficult to relate the self-deprecation of Jer. xx 14-18 to the contemporary cultural mood of Jeremiah's time. Rather, this passage (which Reventlow leaves out of his discussion) is more easily envisioned as "an expression of the prophet's personal anguish and despair."[40]

Berridge, in his careful form-critical response to Reventlow, has pointed out that, while Jeremiah often used a particular Gattung in its purest form, there is always evidence of a personal hand.[41] He cites as examples such passages as Jer. xv 15-18 which is a pure lamentation of the individual, except for vs. 16 which does not fit any element of the Gattung. Another typical alteration is seen in Jer. i 17-19, which is a salvation oracle in which Jeremiah has replaced אל with חחת for word play, a distinctive feature of the prophet. Frequently Jeremiah uses old terminology within an entirely new context or in a very fresh way (cf. xvii 14a; i 7 where the typical verbs of the

call narrative such as "send" and "go" are combined with the verbs "command" and "speak"; or the new application of שׁשׁוּן in xv 16 and שִׂמְחָה in xvi 9). Berridge concludes that

> . . . it is precisely these passages, where it is obvious that Jeremiah has freely used older Gattungen, which contain the most invaluable evidence of the individuality of the prophet Jeremiah. On the basis of these and other texts in the Book of Jeremiah, we would affirm that an important key to an understanding of the person of Jeremiah is provided by the prophet's repeated and diverse confrontations with Yahweh's word, and by his consciousness of his solidarity with the people to whom he ministered during the most critical period of Israel's history. 42

Berridge's emphasis on the unique within the typical in the writings of Jeremiah as a window through which we can see the prophet himself has been a valuable balance to the work of Reventlow.[43]

It is this direction that most of the recent commentators have moved, though many have certainly gone beyond Berridge in returning to a more traditional view of the confessions as self-conscious expressions of the prophet rather than proclamations with personal elements. Those who give careful attention to the forms have stressed that a genre derived from the cult or from the law does not necessarily possess cultic or legal significance. A careful distinction must be made between the original meaning of the genre and its function for prophetic utterance. Bright returns to the view that the confessions were never uttered publicly and that they were only included with other genuinely Jeremianic materials through a long process of

both oral and written transmission.[44] He is again willing to make broad caricature statements about the prophet, assuming that the self-disclosures accurately reflect the man.[45] Similarly, Thompson sees the confessions as authentic expressions of the "character of this lonely, dedicated servant of God."[46]

There have been many responses to the question "What do the self-disclosures represent?" and those who have espoused less traditional views have done so largely on the basis of a form-critical analysis. But where this analysis has focused too closely on the typical nature of the structures, there has been failure to appreciate the flexibility of genre, setting, function, and text in relationship to each other. The result has often been the unnecessary obfuscation of the person of Jeremiah behind a conjectural construct based more on the misapplication of a methodology than on sound critical judgment. Knierim is right in his assertion than any text represents a complex matrix of literary and historical factors.

> Within the concept of such a historical sociology of language, the role of form criticism would be to employ its tools heuristically. It would have to ask what, in a given text, constituted the communication event between writer and readers, between speaker and listener in a typical way. It would have to ask how the typical factors were related to one another and how the typical and the unique interact. . . . it means also that we are no longer stuck with the expectation of a distinct typicality in a text when such a typicality may never have been constitutive for its existence. 47

II. To this point in our discussion of the relation between the historical Jeremiah and the Book of Jeremiah, each of the scholars mentioned has basically assumed Jeremianic authorship of the confessions. Some, like Reventlow, would suggest that very little can be known specifically about the prophet from his work, since the confessions do not represent his own personal feelings, but rather a cultic liturgy. Thus in answer to our second question, "To what degree do the self-disclosures reveal the historical Jeremiah?", these scholars would reply, "We can know very little about his personal life, though of course we can evaluate his theological understanding and literary expertise on the basis of the work which came from his hand." But now, we will turn in another direction and interact with those scholars who have suggested that little can be known about the historical Jeremiah for a completely different reason, namely that the text as we have it within our canon does not represent the historical prophet, but rather is a result of a very complex redactional and editorial process, which again obscures the historical prophet from our view.

Often credited as one of the earliest commentators to question the Jeremianic authenticity of certain passages was Bernhard Stade, who mentioned in passing that he regarded Jer. xx 7-18 (especially vs. 16) as coming from a later period.[48] Schmidt, in 1901, suggested that only a few authentic laments were interspersed among oracles which were

the work of later editors. The "I" found in passages such as Jer. xii 1-6 was a reference to the community and the passage was spoken looking back on the exile. Schmidt saw nothing in this passage which was suggestive of Jeremiah. Furthermore, he held that xv 10 and xv 11-14 were glosses, that xv 15-18 was a Zion lamentation, and that xv 19-21 was addressed to the nation about to return to Palestine from Babylon. Jer. xvii 12f., 14-18 were of late origin because of their affinity to the Psalms and Proverbs. Again the nation was the speaker. Jer. xx 7-13, 14-18 were from different hands from the Persian period or later, probably influenced by Job iii 2ff.[49] Even with such critical skepticism, Schmidt was still able to say that Jeremiah's life "was a long and noble martyrdom."[50] Duhm was the first to argue from his newly formulated pattern for literary criticism based largely on metrical theory that a considerable amount of the Book of Jeremiah represented expansions by Deuteronomistic redactors of the exilic and post-exilic periods. He limited the authentic oracles of Jeremiah to 280 verses (mostly poetry in the 3:2 Qinah rhythm).[51] His work was foundational for much of the literary criticism which followed, though he personally did not question Jeremianic authenticity of most of the self-disclosures. Hölscher was an interesting figure at this point in the history of exegesis, since his emphasis on the ecstatic and visionary phenomena of prophecy opened the door for many of the psychological studies which followed, while

his critical judgment, which excluded the "confessions" from the authentic Jeremianic material, added scholarly fuel to the flames of source critical skepticism.[52] Ewald's influence is still apparent, however, as he refers to Jeremiah as a "sympathetic" and a "tender, . . . anxious soul."[53]

During the next few decades, the attention of source criticism focused only peripherally on the confessions, centering rather in the prose sections of Jeremiah. Mowinckel posited three major collections of material in the Book of Jeremiah which he designated as Types A, B, and C. It was Mowinckel's view that Type A (the poetic sections mainly found in Jer. i-xxv) was largely authentic material, while Type B (the "biographical" prose material) and Type C ("the prose sermons") were the compositions of later editors and redactors.[54] Scholars have subsequently assigned these sections to various people or groups and to various historical periods. Many, like Skinner, have followed Mowinckel in seeing the hands of the so-called "Deuteronomic School" freely editing the Jeremianic materials as the basis for the furtherance of their on-going concerns.[55] H. G. May in 1942 argued that the work was that of an anonymous biographer who lived no earlier than the first half of the 5th century B.C. This "biographer" collected all of the available materials, including the oracles of Jeremiah, Jeremiah's memoirs, and other early materials, and combined them with his own work, including speeches and oracles of

his own composition which he placed in Jeremiah's mouth. His primary concern in the Book was the return from exile of both Israel and Judah and the restoration of the Davidic monarchy.[56] May's work has been strongly criticized by Bright and others, who maintain that stylistic and historical considerations suggest that a significant portion of the book contains material which was available in written form during the lifetime of Jeremiah.[57] Eissfeldt, for example, has argued persuasively that the bulk of the biographical narrative material should be assigned to Baruch.[58] More recently has come the work of Nicholson, who holds that the prose tradition is the deposit of preaching activity in Babylon after the prophet's death.[59] It was the work of a group of Deuteronomistic theologians whose desire was to demonstrate to the exiles that all of Israel's blessings were a result of obedience and all of her misfortune the result of unfaithfulness within the terms of the Sinai covenant. The Jeremianic traditions were a good source for this preaching since the oracles contained both the certain doom, which had become an historical fact with the exile, and the possibility of repentance which provided new hope. Thiel has followed a similar line, although he locates the Deuteronomistic activity in Judah after the deportation. Jer. i-xxv is seen as a very careful redaction of the Jeremiah tradition, not only in the theological point of view presented in the prose, but also in the subtle arrangement of the authentic oracles.[60] But even Nicholson

and Thiel, who see the book as the result of a substantial redactional process, continue to assume the Jeremianic authorship of the great bulk of the poetic oracles. Nicholson boldly asserts concerning the confessions: "That they originated as the outpourings of [Jeremiah's] own inner struggle cannot seriously be questioned."[61]

Based to a degree on precisely the kind of redactional criticism that I have been reviewing, but moving in another direction in assessing the relationship between the "self-disclosures" and the historical Jeremiah, has been the work of Gerstenberger and Gunneweg.[62] In his analysis of Jer. xv 10-21, Gerstenberger argues that the historical events and prophetic personality behind the passage are irretrievably lost within the conventional forms, the biblical texts having assimilated and modified the unique details. The passage as it stands reflects the social and cultic habits and institutions which fashioned it, and should be studied in reference to the sociologically definable situation, namely the exilic cult. The complex of textual units shows a late mixture of various sources which has been molded to express new and exilic views of God, prophetism, and people.[63] The editor intended to make plain the crucial role which Jeremiah played for the people, but the "I" of the passage represents only a fictitious representative of the nation, not the historical prophet.[64] Gunneweg sees the confessions as an interpretation of Jeremiah's proclamation and person. His is portrayed as the exemplary suffering of

a righteous man--the "suffering messenger of a suffering God."[65] He asserts that little of a psychological nature can be discovered concerning the prophet. Jeremiah's life must be read theologically as kerygma.

> It becomes clear that this prophet too, about whose personal life scholarship considered itself so well informed, remains hidden much further behind his proclamation and its interpretation than one previously supposed. But this is only superficially a loss. The prophecy of Jeremiah, and also its secondary interpretation, contain less piety to be psychologically illuminated, but in its place the more kerygma to be theologically comprehended. 66

The direction in which both Gerstenberger and Gunneweg move (although they can hardly be said to be following exactly the same course) is toward viewing the authentic Jeremianic material of the book as so thoroughly edited and utilized for the special, theological purposes of the later, exilic community, that virtually nothing remains of the historical prophet. In their view, exegetes should presumably assume that a given pericope is secondary unless there is compelling evidence that it can only be understood within the concrete conditions of the prophet's own time.

While careful attention should be given to the redactional history of each passage so far as it can be discerned, Gerstenberger and Gunneweg have made broader assumptions about the results of such criticism than can be substantiated. Against these assumptions, I would argue the following. First, Gerstenberger asserts that the complex form of the Jeremianic material is such that we can no

longer penetrate to the prophet himself, still less reconstruct his own thought and experience. But the descriptions, special characteristics, and vocabulary reflected in the confessions do not conflict with what we otherwise are told about Jeremiah, and, unless it is argued that the prophet is a wholly fictitious personality, there is no concrete reason to question the authenticity of the great bulk of the poetry, even if we question its final arrangement.[67] Second, if it can be granted that quantities of original material are preserved, it must be affirmed that a relationship exists between the day to day realities of the prophet's life and experience and the words he must have spoken. His words may indeed be obscured or somewhat altered in context by the tradition, but it is not in the nature of biblical redaction to wholly rewrite material. Rather, original material is preserved wherever possible, but presented in an arrangement suitable to the theological purposes of the redactors. Third, if the passages of self-disclosure are largely the work of later shaping, we would expect them to be far more congruent with their contexts. It is the fundamental purpose of an editor to eliminate the unevenness of a text. But this is not the case in Jeremiah. It is precisely because unevenness exists that we can postulate different layers of the tradition, and can assume that authentic materials have been preserved within the editorial mosaic. Fourth, personal elements within prophetic literature are not unique to Jeremiah, so

the inclusions of the material here need not be doubted due to lack of precedent. That which distinguishes the individual prophets within the relative coherence of the prophetic movement is the degree to which individual characteristics of expression, apprehension of calling, religious experience, and features of personality are presented.[68] That such material exists in the Book of Jeremiah is not surprising. There is no need to follow Gunneweg's assumption that what appears to be personal description is really a corporate expression. What must be explained in the case of Jeremiah is the extent of personal material, and the fact that the quantity is uniquely large argues for its authenticity.

In the last analysis, it may be impossible to ascertain the degree to which the self-disclosures reveal the historical Jeremiah, since there is always a certain distance between an artist and his work which cannot be eliminated. But the fundamental authenticity of the "self-disclosures" and their connection with the prophet seem certain, despite a few voices raised to the contrary.

III. In the case of each of the exegetes whose work has been reviewed, it remains to evaluate the function which is attached to the self-disclosures within the book. As we have noted, the "function" must be carefully evaluated both in its relation to and its distinction from the "form". Determining the function of a passage is far more complex than identifying the form, since it also includes the socio-

historic setting, the redactional history, the theological background, the literary context, etc. The question of why the apparent self-disclosures were included within the Jeremianic corpus is a key element in interpretation and gives us evidence of whether the passages can be viewed as coming from the mouth of the prophet, or whether they must be given another, more reasonable origin. Conversely, when a commentator has made an assessment of the authenticity of certain material, his work must be verified in relation to whether his explanation of the function of the text is also plausible.

For example, if one decides that the so-called "self-disclosures" are non-Jeremianic through some source-critical evaluation, then the question must be asked as to both its origin and purpose within the final document in order to determine whether the critical evaluation is reasonable. Why would material which is so unique and distinctive in the literature of Israelite prophetism be fabricated by a non-Jeremianic source and intertwined with more standard proclamation in such a haphazard manner? Was its purpose to discredit the prophet, and if so, why? Or if it was to honor him, why the self-deprecating content? If its purpose was more theological,[69] why was it so closely related to an individual? Are the passages designed to reflect the righteous suffering of "Everyman" and, therefore, bring explanation and comfort to the exilic people who were in pain?[70] But then why choose the character of a prophet as

the vehicle for the expression? Attempts to anchor the material primarily in the exilic community have created more problems than they have solved.

It is also possible to assume that the self-disclosures are basically Jeremianic in substance, but highly edited, so that the original intent (and personality) of the prophet, which may have been very different than that of the editor(s), is forever obscured. Here the function of the entire work as determined by the concerns of the editors rather than the original intent of the prophet controls how the materials are utilized. The passages, which may well have been composed by Jeremiah, could have enjoyed a growing popularity and eventually been given a setting within the cult where they continued to thrive until finally they came to be included in the book for theological reasons. If the passages indeed came to be used in a context quite different from their original setting, we must ask how such personal disclosures, particularly those retaining specific autobiographical material would have been used in a cultic setting. Further, it should be noted that the use of traditional material within a new setting does not disallow the discovery of a great deal about the original author.

Other commentators have suggested that while the passages are authentically Jeremianic, their function was never to express anything essentially personal about the prophet. The very forms of individual and communal laments which were employed by the prophet gave a decisive cast to

his words so that they were readily taken up by others and applied to their own condition. The confessions were not meant to be a picture of the prophet, but rather a generalized picture of a life of faithfulness to Yahweh. As Gunneweg states:

> The confessions are interpretations of Jeremiah's proclamation and person; they interpret his fate along the lines of the exemplary "I" of the lament psalms; what Jeremiah suffers is the fulfillment and concretization of what the lament-formula already expressed; Jeremiah is the exemplarily suffering righteous one. 71

In this case, one must ask why so many personal, autobiographical details were included in the laments. Further, as Chambers has commented:

> That Jeremiah himself meant his deeds to be symbolic and prefigurative can be proved in some cases by some of the incidents in the life of the prophet; but it would be very difficult for Gunneweg to demonstrate that the "I" of the Confessions is deliberately placed to show exemplary suffering of an exemplary just man. 72

Reventlow's analysis suggests that they were liturgical pieces, reflecting the activity and theology of the cult but not the individual personality of the prophet. But, again, there are too many distinctly personal elements and variations within the traditional forms utilized for this to be a tenable reconstruction. The evidence is simply not present to demonstrate that the function of the self-disclosures is that strictly defined by the form.

The most common view held by the commentators is that the self-disclosures are authentically Jeremianic, and,

though obviously subject to redaction, have come to us in a substantially original form. Further, the intention of the prophet in his composition of these materials was to express something of his inner turmoil. But still the question must be asked as to how the passages function within their present context, and whether that function was originally intended by the prophet. Most of the older commentators do not approach the subject of the relationship between intentionality and function. The intention of the prophet was simply self-expression, although the passages ultimately functioned in demonstrating the decline of an era in the history of prophetism or the advent of a new era in individual religiosity.[73] If the prophet did not have a particular function in mind for the publication or proclamation of the material, it seems likely that, given his private intention, he would also have wanted this material to remain private. Many commentators have perceived this problem and have, therefore, posited that these private musings of the prophet were never intended for public display, primarily because they were too scandalous. Nevertheless, they were gathered and published by a redactor or a Jeremiah "school" who were eager to include all extant Jeremianic materials.[74] However, if these materials indeed reflected a separate source, it is surprising that they should be so scattered within the final book, unless the contexts were meant to express a particular chronology or ideological progression (which is certainly not readily

apparent), or unless the passages came to be attached traditionally to other oracles even though they had no original connection with these contexts.

There are other problems which arise as well if the self-disclosures are only interpreted to be expressions of Jeremiah's own, private feelings--a sort of journal of loneliness, doubt, suffering, and anger, as well as occasional glimpses of joy. For example, as Mowinckel and (in a more radical way) Reventlow have indicated, the traditional forms of public pronouncement in which these materials appear should serve as an indication that a more public disclosure may have been intended.[75] Without interpreting the material as essentially impersonal and liturgical [Reventlow], it is quite possible to argue that Jeremiah had a public function in mind (see below). Another problem with utilizing these materials as purely psychological data is that the confessions have been cited to demonstrate vastly different psychological profiles in the history of exegesis. The prophet has been portrayed as both weak[76] and strong,[77] both timid[78] and powerful.[79] It has also been demonstrated by Bright that a simple rearranging of the order a passage such as Jer. xi 18-xii 6 (placing xii 1-6 before xi 18-23) can completely change the emotional tone.[80] There are real limits which must be recognized in order to avoid psychological reductionism.

Intention and function begin to coalesce if Jeremiah meant these expressions to be made public, either as a

personal witness within his on-going proclamation or as a part of his recorded memoirs.[81] In the former case, they might then be interpreted either as propaganda through which the prophet attempted to manipulate the people, or as authentic expressions of his feelings through which Jeremiah was trying to clarify the public image of his prophetic vocation and to authenticate his call in the face of stern, skeptical opposition. In the latter case, the intent could have included a broad range of functions, such as self-authentication, an examination and apologia of suffering, and the struggle to understand the prophetic vocation beyond the socio-historical expectations of Jeremiah's day. An advantage of this direction is that it avoids the bifurcation of the man and his office, a pitfall of the more psychological approaches, and a process that even Jeremiah himself could not accomplish, though he apparently tried during those moments when the weight of his vocation seemed too great to bear. In fact, it may be through the self-disclosures that we are intended to see the man struggling with his vocation.[82]

It is my view, despite an admittedly complex history of transmission and redaction, that the materials of self-disclosure found largely in Jer. i-xxv are original with the prophet Jeremiah and are intended to be accurate statements of the prophet's personal turmoil. As we shall see in closer analysis, the vocabulary, motifs, and style of the self-disclosures have strong connections with the rest of

the poetic material in Jeremiah. Thus, the prophet's personal hand seems apparent even though this material must be classified as a corpus of literature distinct from the rest of the poetic oracles. Both the similarities and the differences of this material from the rest of the poetry argue for its authenticity. Because there seems to be a greater literary congruance between this material and the rest of the poetry (as well as some of the prose sermons) than between this material and the more obvious connecting passages of the redactionist, the self-disclosures may be more readily identified with the prophet than with his editors. The distinctive nature of these passages, however, demonstrates that the unique quality of this material was recognized by the editors and was included substantially without alteration in whatever contexts seemed appropriate. There are substantive reasons why the editors might have been tempted to reformulate the personal expressions (and this process can in fact be seen in the interpretive renderings of the ancient versions), but generally the self-disclosures are inserted with few demonstrable changes that would have been made for the sole purpose of internal congruance. Often, the personal expressions of the prophet appear somewhat disruptive to the context and might seemingly have been deleted by the editors, if they had not represented a strong textual and/or oral tradition. In addition, there are strong bonds which connect this material together, and there is scant evidence to suggest that it is

not all from the same source. The overt personal references and expressions which are uniquely Jeremianic and atypical of the forms which are utilized, suggest that the prophet intended to make a personal statement rather than speaking either as a liturgist or as an exemplar for the people.

Since their inclusion seems to be intentional, the self-disclosures must also serve a definite function beyond the exposure of Jeremiah's psychological profile. Many scholars do not accept the view that the self-disclosures were ever meant for publication, largely, I presume, because of their evaluation that the passages are too scandalous. But if they were only private expressions, where did the compiler get them? They must have had a stage of oral transmission which suggests a public knowledge of the material (since the prophet does not seem to have a wide circle of associates), or else they were written and filed away with someone like Baruch, again an indication of some eventual publication. It is certainly possible that the self-disclosures may have been independent texts composed within a particular historical and social setting and then taken and utilized for a time within another setting until they were finally reincorporated into the book by a compiler who was trying to exhibit Jeremiah as an exemplar for individual piety.[83] Baruch, for example, as a biographer, may have been eager to publish everything which he could attribute to the prophet, and, therefore, this material was placed within the context of other material written in the

same period. Baruch's own confession in chapter xlv suggests that he may have had a personal reason for lending a tone of confession to the book. The point of this possible reconstruction is to demonstrate that it is possible that Jeremiah's intention might have been different than the function given the material by his compilers. But it seems just as likely that the material, which was designed to function as some kind of public proclamation, was accurately preserved both in its personal intent and in its function, and given an appropriate place in the final anthology. In the self-disclosures can be seen a "rhetorical setting" somewhat different than the settings of other oracles.[84] The personal dimensions of the passages have a social, theological, and apologetic significance beyond psychological self-expression. The use of traditional forms and motifs serve to emphasize both the public intention and often the theological function of a given passage. Jeremiah's suffering is seen as inseparable from his office.

In the study which follows, I will first explore from the Book of Jeremiah itself the evidence which indicates the nature and extent of the prophetic orthodoxy of the late 7th century B.C. It is against this background that Jeremiah was nurtured and was called to prophesy. Next I will identify, evaluate, and interpret the "self-disclosures" of Jeremiah, with an emphasis on what they reveal about the

nature of the prophet's suffering and the reasons why his suffering was expressed. As we shall see, his agony was not a result of his weak or deficient character, but rather a product of various facets of his vocational struggle.. At times, that which was revealed to the prophet overwhelmed him. His identification with the people and his realization of what they would suffer caused him great pain. At other times, his suffering proceeded from the failure of his cultural and theological expectations to interpret what he was encountering as a prophet. The prophetic orthodoxy of his day could neither explain his condition nor authenticate his sense of call. Ultimately, Jeremiah came to understand his vocation as a powerful interaction with the "word of Yahweh" in his life. It was the "word" which provided a key to the mysterious and lonely direction which set him apart from the other "prophets." I will illustrate how the themes of suffering, vocation, and the "word of Yahweh" come together in the call narrative, which eventually became the introduction to the entire book. And finally, I will summarize this study with some suggestions regarding the intention and theological observations of the self-disclosures when studied from the perspective of one man's exploration of suffering and the prophetic vocation.

PROPHETIC ORTHODOXY AND CULTIC PROPHECY IN JEREMIAH

By the late seventh century B.C., the phenomenon of prophecy in Judah involved a well-established tradition. It was not a tradition founded upon a uniformity in the historical experience of those who were called or called themselves prophets. The Old Testament (OT) presents a plurality of views concerning the nature of the prophetic experience. But rather it was a tradition which had come to surround what we might call the "prophetic office." The נביא, as the one who exercised this office was consistently known, had inherited a history which created certain expectations of those who functioned in the office, forms of prophetic expression and traditional motifs which were used to convey the message, a theology which in 7th century Judah was dominated by the Jerusalem cult and sacral kingship, and a relationship to the cultic and political institutions of the day. When Jeremiah began his prophetic ministry in 627 B.C., he stood, as did all of the prophets of his day, within the influence of a traditionally defined office. And it was precisely against the background of this tradition that he emerged as a unique individual who made a distinctive contribution to the eventual alteration of the prophetic tradition.

The nature of the prophetic tradition has been the topic of extensive debate throughout the last century. Among the followers of Wellhausen, which included such figures as Duhm and G. A. Smith, the view was held that there was an almost irreconcilable antagonism between the prophets and the priests in Israel. The prophets were pictured as those who stood against the cult, decrying the sacrificial system and the institutional vestiges, while the priests were the purveyors of multifarious institutional, religious services. Volz summarizes this view by suggesting that

> . . . the religion of the OT prophets stands in sharpest contrast to the religion of the priests, to cultic religion. The religion of the priests is a religion of sacrifice. The priest carries the gifts of men up towards God. The religion of the prophets is a religion of the Word. It brings the voice of God down to men, the voice that creates life and that one must obey. While the cultic ritual is rigid, often remains the same for centuries and sometimes smothers new seeds of faith like a firm blanket, the Word is alive, acting, creating. 1

Mowinckel questioned this radical separation of office by arguing from a form-critical analysis that cultic officials often had prophetic functions.[2] His view was further elaborated by A. R. Johnson who saw the prophet as a cultic official with a "sacramental" function of delivering ecstatic oracles and a "sacrificial" function of interceding on behalf of the people.[3] The נביא was an essential part of the cultic personnel whose vocation consisted of a deep concern for the שָׁלוֹם of God's people. Halder, working at the same time as the publication of Johnson's first

monograph, supported Johnson's conclusions with a wealth of well-documented material relating to the relationship of priests and prophets as cultic officials in the religions throughout the Ancient Near East.[4] He suggested that our understanding of the relationship between נביא and כהן in Israel, should be based on the paradigm of the cultic offices of mahhu and baru in east Semitic socio-religious history, in which case the line of demarcation between the two categories with respect to their functions becomes blurred.

The obfuscation of the particular roles of priest and prophet within the cult of Israel has not found universal acceptance. But even conservative scholars like Young have agreed that at least some connection between the prophets and the cult must be acknowledged.[5] For Young, however, the fallacy of viewing the prophet as essentially a "cultic specialist" lies in the failure to differentiate between the "false" prophets, who may indeed have exercised such a role, and the "true" prophets who were called by God to a very different role. "Any serious attempt," Young states, "to account for the origin and nature of prophecy in Israel must take full account of these two groups and of the profound gulf which separated them."[6] Wolff agrees, saying that while Obadiah and Habbakuk may have had a prophetic office in the cult, ". . . in general we see the classical prophets strongly opposed to the official temple prophets and also the priests (Isa. 28:7ff.; Hos. 4:5; Micah 3:5-8; Jer.

23:11; 26:7f.; Ezek. 7:26; 22:25f.)."[7] He goes on to indicate that the classical prophets belonged to very different occupational groups before their calls and were in no way bound to the homogeneous cultic institution. Furthermore, they appeared publically as detached individuals rather than as a part of any group. This approach, however, is doomed to failure, according to Gunneweg, who says that sociologically all attempts made to differentiate between the נביאים and the canonical prophets have failed.[8] The approach of Würthwein, Berger, and others has been to locate the canonical prophets at the beginning of their careers within the ranks of the cultic prophets, but then to see them driven by the message which they were called to proclaim beyond the cult definitions of their function.[9]

The focus of much of the debate indicated above has been the relationship of those known as נביאים to the institutional religion of Israel, and the relationship in turn of the canonical prophets to the נביאים. This has not proven to be an altogether fruitful approach since a careful exegetical study of the available materials suggests that, while the prophets did have some kind of an official relationship with the cult, the extent and exact nature of that relationship simply cannot be ascertained. Certainly the prophetic vocation does not appear as a carefully defined, consistent institutional role. Approaching the issue as a battle between the "true" prophets on the one

side and the "false" prophets on the other, assumes an institutional role and corporate identity of the "false" prophets as well as overemphasizing the individualistic and isolationist nature of the "true" prophets. Neither of these assumptions can be fully supported. Furthermore, the distinction between the "true" and "false" prophets tends to be blurred within the texts themselves. Even Jeremiah, who generally sees himself over against the other prophets of his day, struggles with how to make the distinction between him and them clear. It was apparently not clear by any external criterion. His confrontation with Hananiah, which I will discuss more fully below, is far from decisive except in the long-term. And, at least in the case of Uriah (Jer. xxvi 20ff.), there were those among the prophets who "prophesied the same things against this city and this land as Jeremiah did" (vs. 20), thus diluting what might have been an entirely distinctive message on the part of Jeremiah.

The question of the נביאים in the Book of Jeremiah is approached more fruitfully by asking whether a "prophetic orthodoxy" in the late seventh century can be ascertained, rather than by further conjecture into the particular relationship of prophet and cult. Was there a commonly held notion of the role, message, and perhaps even temperament of the נביא within the socio-historical framework of the age? If a "prophetic orthodoxy" existed, to which Jeremiah would likely have subscribed as a vocational definition (at least

in the initial stages of his career), it is easier to see why he struggled so intensely with the other prophets. Not only was their message at odds with his own, but their understanding of vocation was also proving false in his experience, though he shared some preconceptions with them. What I will suggest through the following study is that radical distinctions between the canonical prophets and the נביא are most clearly drawn in retrospect. There is also a good deal of solidarity to be seen between Jeremiah and the "prophetic orthodoxy" of his day. Whether officially connected with the cult or not, the idea of נביא carried with it certain expectations. It may well be true, as Rowley suggests, that the cult prophets were "men of profession," while Jeremiah was a "man of vocation," but the differentiation between these two concepts may not have been as clear to the prophet in his early years as his experience would in time lead him to understand.[10]

The "Prophets" in Jeremiah

In some respects, the Book of Jeremiah is a comparatively rich resource from which to build an understanding of the "prophetic orthodoxy" or tradition of the late seventh century. Forms of the noun נביא appear some 94 times in the book as compared with only 59 times in the rest of the writings of the canonical prophets combined.[11] There is a wealth of narrative materials which recount various activities of prophets other than Jeremiah and extended

descriptions of the confrontations between Jeremiah and other prophets.

Among the initial observations which need to be made is that the title "the prophet" (הנבי'א utilizing the definite article and appearing in either the singular or plural form) is used uniformly of all those who in some way exercise a particular socio-historical role. No attempt is made at this level to legitimize certain people over against others. There seems to be an accepted vocational tradition at work which carries with it the title הנבי'א irrespective of the individual differences of those to whom the title was applied. Jeremiah is referred to as "the prophet" 32 times within the prose portions of the book.[12] In addition, Hananiah (Jer. xxviii 5, 10, 12, 17), Uriah (xxvi 20f.), Ahab and Zedekiah (xxix 21), Micah (xxvi 18f.), Shemaiah (xxix 31f.) are all mentioned as individuals who have prophesied. In Jer. xxviii, there is an exact literary correspondence in the use of the title with respect to both Hananiah and Jeremiah (cf. vs. 5). To these individual designations are added "the prophets of Samaria" and "the prophets of Jerusalem" (xxiii 13-15) who appear as general, geographically identified groupings. In an additional twenty instances, "the prophets" are listed as a collective category among other political or social groupings, such as wisemen, kings, officials, elders, diviners, "the people," etc. While criticisms of prophets are numerous, nowhere is the title or classification disputed, nor is any attempt

made to separate Jeremiah from this designation.

The lists in which the epithet "prophets" appears suggest that נביאים were a clearly understood sociological grouping. Most commonly in both poetry and prose, the prophets are listed along with kings, officials, and priests, suggesting a classification of those who have a unique influence on society.[13] In Jer. xxix 1, they are listed along with the surviving elders, priests, and others carried into exile as a significant group to which Jeremiah addressed a letter. As might be expected, a greater number of instances occur where only the two groups "priests and prophets" appear together with the suggestion being that these are the two groups with primary spiritual impact on the people.[14] Jer. xviii 18 is very interesting in this regard since the role of priest is designated as purveyor of the teaching of the law, while counsel comes from the wise, and the word comes from the prophet. It was these functions which Jeremiah's persecutors were trying to preserve in their attack against Jeremiah, whose message they understood as a threat to the social continuation of these roles. It was apparently their belief that the very fabric of society was woven around the functioning of these groups.

Finally, the prophets are listed in two passages along with the "diviners," "interpreters of dreams," and "mediums" (xxvii 9; xxix 8), perhaps suggesting some of their more specific practices (see below).

In addition to referring to a contemporary grouping as

"the prophets," there is also the very interesting epithet "my servants the prophets" (עֲבָדַי הַנְּבִיאִים --vii 25; xxv 4; xxvi 5; xxix 19; xxxv 15; xliv 4) appearing only in prose passages and referring to past messengers of Yahweh "from the time of Egypt" (cf. vii 25) whom God had sent "again and again" with unheeded messages. The question arises as to whether this expanded phrase is meant to be a designation of substantive difference from those who are being called "prophets" at the time of Jeremiah. Since the reference is back to those whose prophetic ministry has been verified through time, it seems likely that the term "my servants" is a legitimate way to designate those who have represented God truly in the past. In that case the reference would indeed be to a slightly different grouping, with an emphasis on God's authentication of their ministry rather than upon their socio-religious function. The fact that this kind of phrase is used in the Book of Jeremiah, but that it is not used of Jeremiah himself nor of any of his contemporaries, further suggests the sociological solidarity of the concept and tradition of the prophetic office within Jeremiah's contemporary setting quite apart from God's authentication.

What I am demonstrating in these preliminary observations is that there is a uniformity which runs through the Book of Jeremiah with regard to the contemporary tradition of a prophetic office. There was a general classification of people in Jeremiah's day who were publicly known as prophets and whose concept of their role

was shaped by a socio-religious tradition which had become the "prophetic orthodoxy" of the late 7th century.

Let us now turn to an examination of some of the specific characteristics of that tradition.

The Role of the Prophets

Because the Book of Jeremiah contains an abundance of narrative as well as oracular material, we can discern something of the role of the prophets by what is said about them as well as what is said by them. This is helpful, since what is spoken by the prophet may not necessarily reflect the expectations of those around him, nor the diversity of his function within the socio-religious framework.

A careful examination of Jeremiah suggests that the prophets had at least the following roles: 1) the receipt and transmission of God's word or perspective with regard to matters of social, political, and personal concern; 2) the intercession to God on behalf of the people; 3) the purveyance of that word which would bring healing and preservation from God in the face of the internal and external threats to the people.

The first role, namely the receipt and transmission of God's word to the people, was seen as the prophets' primary function. The prophets were considered one of a tripartite resource of functionaries which provided the people with the direction which they needed politically, socially, and

spiritually. This is seen most directly in Jer. xviii 18 where the following phrase specifically describes the expectation of the people: "the Law will not cease to come from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor a word from the prophet" (לֹא-תֹאבַד תּוֹרָה מִכֹּהֵן וְעֵצָה מֵחָכָם וְדָבָר מִנָּבִיא). The context of this verse is a statement by those who take offense to the prophecies of Jeremiah and, therefore, assert that it is not necessary to heed or endure him, since the functions of priest, wiseman, and prophet will be preserved effectively without him.[15] It is clear from the verse that it is the "word" with which the prophet is to be most directly identified.

This expectation of the people that the prophet will provide them with a fresh word or perspective from God is further seen in the question which is identified as normative in their interaction with the prophet. In Jer. xxiii 33, Jeremiah is instructed by God as to how to reply when he is asked the question "What is the oracle of the Lord?" (מַה-מַּשָּׂא יהוה). Verse 35 suggests that the questions "What is the Lord's answer" (מֶה-עָנָה יהוה) and "What has the Lord spoken?" (מַה-דִּבֶּר יהוה) were also frequent variations of the same enquiry. It seems quite likely that the prophets were consulted professionally with regard to God's response to a given situation or some insight from God into the events of the future. That this was a common, acceptable, and desirable practice is witnessed by the fact that it is a question asked by the

people (xxiii 33; xxvii 16; xxix 8; etc.), the priests (xxi 2; xxviii 1; xxvii 16; etc.), the king (xxxviii 14; etc.), and even the prophets of one another (xxiii 27, 30, 33).

It was apparently the pressure which this expectation for a "word" from God placed on the prophets that led them to employ whatever means were at their disposal to provide such a word. Visions, dreams, consultations with each other (even "stealing words from one another," xxiii 30), fabrication from their own minds, divination, and attempting to consult Baal when Yahweh seemed silent, were all utilized (cf. xxiii 13, 16, 21-40). Without a "word" the prophet had little utility.

The second role of the prophet was to intercede before God on behalf of the people. In Jer. xxvii 18, Jeremiah draws upon this traditional function as a mark of widely understood authenticity for the prophet. The ability to intercede was viewed as the correlative of being able to hear God. One who "stood in the council of Yahweh" (xxiii 18) was in a position to enter into dialogue with him. "If they are prophets and have the word of the Lord," said Jeremiah (xxvii 18), "let them plead (פָּגְעוּ-נָא) with the Lord Almighty that the furnishings remaining in the house of the Lord and in the palace of the king of Judah and in Jerusalem not be taken to Babylon." On several occasions, delegations approach Jeremiah to pray to Yahweh on their behalf. In Jer. xlii 1-3, ". . . all the people from the least to the greatest approached and said to Jeremiah the

prophet, 'Please hear our petition and pray (הִתְפַּלֵּל) to the Lord your God for this entire remnant. . .'" (But see vs. 20.) In Jer. xxxvii 3, King Zedekiah ". . . sent Jehucal son of Shelemiah with the priest Zephaniah son of Maaseiah to Jeremiah the prophet with this message: 'Please pray to the Lord our God for us.'" These instances suggest that this was a common practice, not only in relation to Jeremiah, but to the prophets in general.

In Jer. xxix 7, Jeremiah instructs the exilic community in Babylon through a letter, to ". . .seek the peace (שָׁלוֹם) of the city [LXX: "the land"] to which I have carried you into exile. Pray (וְהִתְפַּלְלוּ) to the Lord on its behalf, because if it prospers, you too will prosper. . ." The most commonly used verb in connection with intercession in pre-exilic passages is הִתְפַּלֵּל (10 times in Jeremiah). Buber states that "in all the pre-exilic passages, in which the verb is used in the sense of intercession (and this is apparently its first meaning), it is only used of men called prophets."[16] Common subjects include Abraham, Moses, Samuel, Elishah, and Jeremiah. In this instance, Jeremiah is commanding that intercession be made by the community. Since "prophets" are included among the exiles to whom the letter is addressed (vs. 1), it may very well be that Jeremiah's intent in verse 7 (and God's affirmation of this action in vs. 12) was that the prophets within the community begin to exercise their intercessory role not only in relation to the exiles but also in relation to the

Babylonians.

Beyond the occasions when intercession was requested, there is also some indication that the prophet interceded for the people routinely as a part of his role. Two sentences within the confessions of Jeremiah are particularly interesting. The first is xviii 20b which reads: "Remember that I stood before you and spoke in their behalf to turn your wrath away from them" (זְכֹר עָמְדִי לְפָנֶיךָ לְדַבֵּר עֲלֵיהֶם טוֹבָה לְהָשִׁיב אֶת-חֲמָתְךָ מֵהֶם:). While there are some variants suggested in the ancient versions for the phrases and verses surrounding this statement, this particular sentence is unencumbered. As both Wright and Cross have pointed out, the phrase עמד לפני ("to stand before") is used in two ways in the OT.[17] First, it is used cultically as "to stand before" the Ark or "to stand before" Yahweh's throne which was the Ark. Second, it is used in reference to standing before the Divine Council, as in Jer. xxiii 18, I Kings xxii 21; Zech. iii 1, 3 (where standing before the angel carries the idea of the council); Gen. xix 27; Ps. lxxvi 8-10. In this second technical usage, the prophet is seen as the representative of the people in the Council of Yahweh. He is not only the messenger who hears the sentence of judgment and the legitimate "word" in the Divine Council and is charged with its proclamation so that the people will hear and repent (cf. Jer. xxiii 18, 22), but he also apparently acts as the legal counsel for the defense of the people. It is this designated role as intercessor which

permits the prophet so much freedom in his arguments before God on behalf of the people. He stands before God "to speak for their good" (לדבר עליהם טובה) and, in this case, that involves trying to "turn away [God's] wrath from them." It is significant that this same technical usage is employed in relation to Moses and Samuel in Jer. xv 1, who, in their roles as intercessors, also "were to stand before" God.

"Turning away God's wrath" is the most frequent result which is desired on the part of those who intercede. The intercessor appeals to God's covenant-keeping love, knowing that the sentence of judgment is not always unalterable. Many examples of a "judgment/intercession/alteration of judgment" pattern can be found in the OT, including the following:

Judgment	Intercession	Alteration
Exod. xxxii 10	Exod. xxxii 11-13	Exod. xxxii 14
Num. xiv 11, 12	Num. xiv 13, 14	Num. xiv 20
Amos vii 1, 4	Amos vii 2, 5	Amos vii 3, 6
Jer. ii 1-iii 5	Jer. iii 21-25	Jer. iv 1-4

It is this kind of alteration in judgment which Jeremiah indicates that he has sought for his people through his first person singular intercession and his first person plural confession on behalf of the people. He has labored for their good, which was a primary function of the prophetic office for Moses (Exod. xviii 19; ix 27-33; xxxii 11-14; xxxiii 12-16; xxxiv 9; etc.), Samuel (I Sam. vii 5-13; xii 19-23), Elijah (I Kings xvii 20-24), Amos (vii 2, 5), Micah (vii 14), and other prophets before him, as well as an expected role for the prophets who were his

contemporaries (including Habakkuk, cf. Hab. iii 2).

The second verse of note regarding the intercession of Jeremiah is much more difficult, but certainly of great interest. Jer. xv 10, 11 stands as the "bridge" passage between what may be described as an extended dialogue on the judgment of the nation (Jer. xiv 1 - xv 9) and Jeremiah's complaint and accusation before God (xv 15-18).[18] It is arguable that Jer. xiv-xv represents an example of the kind of dialogue which could be set in the context of the Divine Council.[19] The covenant lawsuit is proclaimed, the prophet pleads for the people, and God responds to the intercession. A possible outline for the chapters might be:

xiv 1-6 -- covenant lawsuit
xiv 7-9 -- intercession by the prophet representing the people (1st person plural construction)
xiv 10-12 -- denial of petition
xiv 13 -- the plea continues
xiv 14-16 -- covenant lawsuit against the prophets
xiv 17-22 -- intercession which here includes both 1st person singular and 1st person plural statements made by the prophet
xv 1-9 -- denial of petition

Jer. xv 10, 11 reflects the prophet's great anguish at having to deliver such a message of complete doom. This may well have given rise to a cry of personal lament of the type exhibited in vs. 10, since Jeremiah certainly did not enjoy his task and the consequent identity of being a "man of strife and a man of contention to all the land." And these verses lead aptly into vss. 15-18 where the prophet complains that God has treated him very unfairly. He has been persecuted, insulted, isolated, and filled with indignation--all for the sake of God's call to him. He has

fulfilled what he believes to be his "calling" by joyfully receiving God's word and by becoming identified with God himself. Yet, despite the fact that Jeremiah feels that he has acted in obedience, his life is in shambles. God has seemingly proved unfaithful. God has not kept his promises; and Jeremiah accuses him of being deceitful and untrustworthy.

Unfortunately the seams which bind the various pericopes within this patchwork are not as smooth and invisible as one might assume by reading the preceding paragraph. For example, verse 11, with which we are directly concerned as a possible statement concerning the intercessory role of the prophet, can either be viewed as the reply of Yahweh to the individual lament of vs. 10, or as a continuation of that lament, depending on whether the first word is read as אמר with the MT or as אמן with the LXX. It is therefore important that we take time at this point to examine this verse with some care.

The MT initially appears straightforward as verse 11 opens with אמר יהוה . This reading (pointed אָמַר rather than אֱמֹר = "speak!") is followed by the Targ., Vulg. and Pesh. as well as Symmachus, Aquila, and the Medieval Jewish commentators (Rashi, Kimchi). If we read with the MT, the verse must be taken as God's words of comfort to the distressed prophet, indicating that the conflict which Jeremiah feels will in fact result in his strengthening. It is a difficult verse, to say the least, and the possible

translations are manifold. In this case, it would have little or nothing to do with the intercessory role of the prophet. The LXX, however, reads γένοιτο, δέσποτα, . . ., presumably rendering Hebrew אָמֵן , and quite a good case can be made for emending the MT even against the witness of the other ancient versions. It is far too simplistic to say that the LXX has simply misread the Hebrew and overlooked the change of speaker as in xi 18f.

To begin with, the Hebrew itself is not without difficulty. אמר יהוה does not usually appear as the introduction to divine discourse. Rather, either ויאמר יהוה or כה אמר יהוה are far more common. Where אמר יהוה does appear, it is generally at the end of a divine pronouncement, very much like נאם-יהוה . In Jeremiah, the perfect construction at the beginning of a statement (rather than an imperfect with a waw-conversive) occurs only one other time (xlvi 25), and in that case it is absent in the LXX rendering. In the other eight occurrences of the phrase in Jeremiah, it appears at the close of the quotation. It should be further noted, that the Hebrew is contextually a much harder reading of the verse than the Greek. Under certain circumstances this would be a very good reason for retaining the MT by arguing that the LXX has attempted to make sense out of a difficult verse by bringing it in line with other similar statements in Jeremiah (e.g. xvii 16; xviii 19). As Talmon points out, however, there is no reason to retain the harder reading אמר , since the

interchange of ה and ב is well attested elsewhere.[20]

While there are difficulties with the BH, there are also those who find difficulties with the Greek. Gerstenberger, for example, notes that אמן is utilized in the OT in only three ways: 1) as an affirmative response formula to a preceding speech (e.g. Num. v 22; Deut. xxvii 15-26); 2) as a conventional expression of agreement (I Kings i 36; Jer. xi 5); and 3) as a closing benediction (Ps. cvi 48; Neh. viii 6; I Chron. xvi 36).[21] He further notes that, since אמן is not found in an opening statement elsewhere in BH, the LXX must be a secondary reading. Talmon counters this argument by suggesting that אמן in conjunction with יהוה should be considered "a special phrase which is only once more employed in the OT, and again in the Book of Jeremiah (11.5)."[22] He suggests that the phrase may consitute "a specifically Jeremianic stylistic feature," synonymous with אָמְנָה and אָמְנָם which precede an oath or statement of legal nature (cf. Gen. xx 12; Ruth iii 12; Job xxxvi 4; II Kings xix 17 = Isa. xxxvii 18; Job ix 4, 5; Josh. vii 20). Bright, following Kittel (BHK), Rudolph (BHS), and others, interprets that "Jeremiah responds to curses by what amounts to an oath: let the curses come true if he has not acted with integrity (which he swears that he has). Thus, Bright translates the phrase as "So be it, Lord, if I did not . . ." or "But I swear, O Yahweh, . . ."[23] It is a strong affirmation of the fact that he has rightly exercised his office as prophet on behalf of the

people and does not deserve the treatment which he is receiving from them.

Contextually, the verse is more plausible coming from the mouth of the prophet, but there are still a few internal, textual difficulties. The first colon (אם-לא שׁרותך לטוב) is a problem because of the verb which appears in the Kᵉtîb as שׁרותך and in the Qᵉrê as שׁריתיך . The root is presumably שׁרת ("to serve, wait upon, be attendant to"), but would be more clearly pointed as שְׁרַתִּיךָ .[24] This root has a definite cultic usage and can also refer to direct service of God (cf. Exod. xxx 20; Deut. xviii 5; I Kings viii 11; I Sam. ii 11; etc.) It is never used, however, in describing God's activity toward men and, therefore, should be accepted as the reading here only if this is Jeremiah's statement rather than God's. Those who follow the MT with the opening phrase must search elsewhere for a satisfactory reconstruction.[25] The next phrase, which maintains some poetic parallelism to the first statement by virtue of the introductory אם-ל(ו)א ,[26] contains the verb הִפְגַּעְתִּי from the root פגע (H). This root appears in three other instances in Jeremiah, and in each of these cases it obviously refers to making intercession. In vii 16, Yahweh instructs the prophet not to intercede with him on behalf of the people (וְאַל-תִּפְגַּע-בִּי). In xxvii 18, to which I have already referred, Jeremiah challenges the prophets to intercede as an authentication of their prophecy (יִפְגְּעוּ-נָא בַּיהוה). And in xxxvi 25, where the verb is in the Hiphil

(as in xv 11), three of the king's advisors strongly "entreat" him not to burn the scroll which Baruch has delivered (הִפְגִּיעוּ בַמֶּלֶךְ). In each case, the verb is followed by an agent to whom the entreaty is addressed which is marked by בְּ. Thus, the phrase reads literally: "Surely, I have interceded to you in time of distress and in time of anguish for the enemy." Bright and others transpose "the enemy" from the end of the verse to a position more suitable, though there is no support in the versions for such an alteration and it is not necessary to an understandable syntax.[27] Bright also emends the אֵת to אֶל or לְ following the LXX in order to make better grammatical sense of the final word (cf. Isa. liii 12; Gen. xxiii 8). As with the first line of the verse, the meaning is evident as long as Jeremiah is the one who is speaking.[28] He has acted faithfully in the manner of his office as prophet and has interceded for the people in their distress. He has implored God to turn his wrath away from them.

The vow form with which this verse opens indicates the emphatic nature of the entire verse. For Jeremiah, there are few facts concerning his office about which he has more assurance than the fact that his role includes intercession for the people. He declares forcefully that he has been faithful to that task. It is my assertion, that such assurance came primarily from the commonly held view of his day (and indeed from earliest traditions about the prophets of Israel) that the prophets had a special role of

intercession. Even after he was forbidden to intercede, he regarded intercessory activity to have merit.[29] The only explanation for this is the indelible mark which his cultural pre-conception had made on his life.

The primary goal of intercession, as I have earlier stated, was to secure God's favor and to procure שָׁלוֹם. Since the language of the covenant lawsuit and judgment frequently included the language of the Deuteronomic curses, intercession was to turn away God's anger and to win the Deuteronomic blessings for the people instead.[30] The pronouncement of judgment was only one phase of the prophetic office. In addition to speaking on behalf of God, the prophet also spoke on behalf of the people and in this sense was a mediator of the covenant.[31]

This brings us to the third role of the prophets which is evident in the Book of Jeremiah, namely the purveyance of that word which would bring healing and preservation from God in the face of the internal and external threats to the people. If the prophets were endowed to win שָׁלוֹם for the people, then the proper exercise of the office would finally include the pronouncement and reiteration of God's חֶסֶד, רַחֲמִים, and שָׁלוֹם which were the underpinnings of the covenant in their experience. The message of Hananiah in Jer. xxviii falls within this framework. His word was one of forthcoming deliverance for the first wave of exiles to Babylon. Jeremiah called his message one of "peace" (vs. 9).

Indeed, variations of this message are the consistent proclamation of the prophets mentioned by Jeremiah with the exception of the prophet Uriah (xxvi 20). In Jer. xxvii 9, 16, Jeremiah makes reference to prophets who have told the people that they will never serve the king of Babylon and that "very soon" the articles from the Temple will be returned. In Jer. xxxvii 9, 19 Jeremiah alludes to the prophets who have told the people that the king of Babylon would not attack the land. And in Jer. xiv 11-13, Jeremiah is instructed not to pray for the well-being (טוֹבָה --cf. xviii 20) of the people, since God intends to destroy them "with the sword, famine and plague" (in accord with covenant curses, cf. Deut. xxviii 25, 39, 22, etc.). But Jeremiah reminds God (vs. 13) that ". . . the prophets keep telling them, 'You will not see the sword or suffer famine. Indeed, I will give you lasting peace (שָׁלוֹם אֱמֶת) in this place.'" In xxvi 8-11, Jeremiah is condemned by the priests and prophets for prophesying against the city, and only narrowly escapes when some elders remind the assembly that Micah also prophesied against the city (vss. 17-19). But the elders also remind the people that in the days of Micah the Lord relented (וַיִּנָּחֶם יהוה).[32] The suggestion here is that Jeremiah's word is not the last word and that "peace and security" might yet be won through intercession.

Jeremiah's summary statement regarding the message of the prophets of his day is found in vi 14 and viii 11: "They treat the wound of my people superficially, saying,

'It is well, it is well' (or 'Peace, peace'), when it is not well" (וַיְרַפְּאוּ אֶת-שֶׁבֶר עַמִּי עַל-נְקֵלָה לֵאמֹר שָׁלוֹם שָׁלוֹם וְאֵין שָׁלוֹם:). There are only minor variations in the verse as it appears in its two separate contexts, and these seem easily accounted for as legitimate variations. Jeremiah identifies the problem of the people of his day as a "brokenness, fracture, or wound." This is a typical description for him as may be seen in Jer. xiv 17 where Jerusalem (בַּת-עַמִּי --cf. viii 11) is described as having suffered "a great brokenness . . . a sorely infected wound" (שֶׁבֶר גָּדוֹל . . . מַכָּה נַחְלָה מְאֹד). The root שבר appears 15 times in nominal forms and 28 times in verbal forms in Jeremiah and is a favorite word of the prophet in describing both the destruction of the land (cf. iv 6, 20; vi 1; viii 20; xlviii 3, 5; l 22; etc.) and wounds or fractures of the people (cf. x 19; xiv 17; xxx 12, 15). In Jer. xxx 15, the question is asked, "Why do you cry out concerning your wound? Your pain is incurable" (מַה-תִּזְעַק עַל-שִׁבְרֵךְ אָנוּשׁ מַכְאֹבֵךְ). For Jeremiah, שׁבר is descriptive of a wound, injury or destruction inflicted by an external force (either a blow or a military compaign), which effects the breaking of wholeness in a person and pain (or in the case of a military campaign, a devastation of the land), and which requires significant healing. Johs. Pedersen goes on to connect the "wound" with evil: "Evil is in its strongest form a breach, shebher, an infringement upon the whole, which is peace. Breaches are most frequently mentioned in

the prophets, in particular Jeremiah. His whole soul is scarred with breaches (10:19) because his people are broken (cf. 8:21; 14:17; 30:12)."[33] Frequently שֶׁבֶר is connected with רפא (cf. Lam. ii 13; Pss. lx 4; xix 11; li 8-9; Isa. xxx 26). Suffering from whatever cause injures deeply. Wholeness (שָׁלוֹם) can be restored only through a thorough healing process and that can be accomplished only by Yahweh himself. In Jer. viii 22, the rhetorical question is asked, "Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? For why has there not emerged (lit.: "gone up") healing of the daughter of my people?" The image in this verse is the emergence of new skin to cover the wound. The Vulg. renders the last line so as to emphasize the meaning: Quare igitur non est obducta cicatrix filiae populi mei? ("Why then is not the wound of the daughter of my people closed?") The answer to these questions is that mere balm or human physicians are not sufficient to bring about the thorough-going healing which a wound created by sin requires. The same problem is seen much later in reference to Babylon. In Jer. li 8, 9, Babylon herself has fallen and is broken. Again the healing arts of men were applied: "Bring balm for her pain. Perhaps she may be healed. We applied healing to Babylon, but she was not healed." The reason given for failure is that the Lord was bringing vindication (vs. 10, cf. Hos. v 13).

The apparent expectation on the part of the people was that the prophets would effect שָׁלוֹם through their

intercession. As a consequence, the prophets did indeed speak encouraging words--words of healing and restoration. But these words apart from the activity of God could have no effect. They could superficially treat the wound, but they could not heal it.

While the acceptable and expected task of the prophets was to intercede for peace, it is also possible that it was assumed that prophets could intercede to bring the curses of the covenant upon the people. Jeremiah certainly exercised this option in asking God for vengeance (xi 20; xviii 21-22; xx 12; etc.). But further, this may be in the background of Jer. xxvi 16, when the officials and all the people restrain the priests and prophets from their murderous intent toward Jeremiah on the basis that he had "spoken in the name of the Lord our God." It may well be that Jeremiah's statement in vs. 15 that they would "bring the guilt of innocent blood" on themselves was a vivid reminder of the presumed power of the prophet which could be exercised either for good or ill. If this activity of the prophet was indeed part of the prophetic orthodoxy of the day, it was surely reserved as protection by the prophets should they fall out of favor. However, it may have been utilized more widely as a means of protection for the people against their enemies. In this case, intercession for the demise of the enemy would actually be intercession for the peace of Jerusalem, and the prophetic invective against the enemy (cf. Jer. xlvi; etc.) would be a word of security for the prophet's constituency.

We have looked at three of the expectations which were widely held in the late 7th century concerning the office of prophet. First, the prophets were to receive and transmit God's word to the people with regard to various social, political, and personal concerns. The people would frequently entreat the prophets to make enquiry of the Lord on their behalf. Second, the prophets were to intercede before the Lord for the people in order to win שלום. And third, the prophets were to bring the word of healing and preservation from God to the people. Jeremiah is portrayed both in concert with these roles (even announcing peace, cf. xxxiii 6) and in reaction to them. But in both cases his response affirms the presence of this "prophetic orthodoxy" with regard to the role and message of the prophets.

Now let us turn to an examination of the "prophetic orthodoxy" with regard to the socio-historic background. What did the tradition which was influential in Jeremiah's day contribute to the contemporary understanding of the office of prophet?

The Socio-historical Expectations

There are basically three major socio-historical influences on the prophetic movement of Jeremiah's day that are evident from the descriptions in the Book of Jeremiah. These are 1) the influence of the recognized canonical prophets of the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries B.C.; 2) the Zion and David ideology, which flourished with

renewed vigor in Jerusalem following the destruction of Israel and the salvation of Jerusalem in the late eighth century; and 3) the Deuteronomic tradition, which was in its ascendency during and following the reform of Josiah.

It is difficult to ascertain the frequency and extent that the writings of earlier prophets were consulted by the prophets of the late 7th century, but there are strong indications that their influence was pervasive. In Jer. xxvi 17-19, some of the "elders of the land" speak out in defense of Jeremiah's prophecy against the city by quoting Micah iii 12 and by further commenting on the history which surrounded this prophecy in the days of Hezekiah. The proper response to a word against the city, they said, was "to fear the Lord and seek his favor" as Hezekiah had done. The assumption was that God would relent and "not bring the disaster he pronounced against them" as had been the case in the days of Micah. Although this argument was propounded by some elders and not by the prophets, it obviously carried authority with both the people and the prophets who heard it, indicating that this type of postulation was honored and probably frequently applied.

Jeremiah himself appeals to the prophetic authority from the past on numerous occasions, indicating that he assumed that such reference carried authority. In xxviii 8, he reminds Hananiah and the people that "from early times the prophets who preceded you and me have prophesied war, disaster and plague against many countries and great

kingdoms." His appeal suggests that a wide exposure to the prophets of the past was common. Furthermore, he sees both himself and Hananiah in direct succession to these prophets. Frequently, Jeremiah reminds the people of the role that the prophets had played in their history. Typical is Jer. vii 25 which reads: "From the day that your fathers went out from the land of Egypt to this day, I sent you repeatedly all my servants the prophets (כָּל-עֲבָדַי הַנְּבִיאִים)" (cf. xxv 4; xxvi 5; xxix 19; xxxv 15; xliv 4). In view in this verse are all of those who had spoken prophetically to the nation since the time of Moses. Through Jeremiah, God further reminds the people that their history has not been marked by attentiveness and obedience to the word brought by the prophets (vii 26). Indeed, Jer. ii 30 indicates that they have been more likely to destroy their prophets than to listen. Nevertheless, these verses make clear that the people certainly had a great awareness of their prophetic past, and were eager to claim for themselves the authority of those whom they had once persecuted.

The influence of earlier prophetic tradition on Jeremiah himself should also be taken as an indication of what was probably a common occurrence among the prophets as a whole in his day. For example, the influence of the prophet Hosea on the oracles of Jeremiah has been demonstrated by a variety of commentators over the years.[34] "The resemblance between the two prophets appears not only in the use of language and figures but extends to fundamental ideas

on God and his relation to Israel," states J. Thompson, and this despite the fact that Hosea was a prophet of Northern Israel writing in the eighth century.[35] Of course, it is difficult to extend this type of influence with certainty to the other prophets, since we do not have extended examples of their oracles to examine, but we may assume that this influence was not an isolated exposure in the case of Jeremiah.

Perhaps the most profound influence of the prophets of the past on the prophets of Jeremiah's day was in their manner of proclamation. Formulaic expressions such as כֹּה אָמַר יהוה and נְאֻם יהוה were the traditional ways in which the prophets identified themselves as Yahweh's messengers. In Jer. xxiii 30-40, Jeremiah indicates that this was exactly the manner in which the prophets spoke, thereby claiming authority from God. It was because of the utilization of the appropriate "style" of canonical prophecy, that there was no external means for differentiating between the true and the false among the prophets. While the Book of Jeremiah does not preserve any of the verse oracles of the "Shalom prophets," we may nevertheless assume that they employed traditional forms of prophetic utterance and traditional motifs. If this were not the case, the prophecies of Jeremiah would have stood out in bold relief. Jeremiah's use of the individual and communal lament forms with the unconventional reversal of the concluding oracle of reassurance (cf. xii 1-5; xiv 1-10; xiv

17-xv 2)[36] may well have been a calculated repartee, not only to the prophetic and cultic tradition which he shared with his contemporaries, but also to the banal use of these forms in his day.

In the use of symbolic action, there are direct examples that the prophets of the seventh century as well as Jeremiah himself followed in the tradition of the prophets of the past.[37] Jeremiah's celibacy was a symbol very much like Hosea's marriage to the harlot, Gomer. At other times, Jeremiah smashed a jar (xix 10-11), bought a field (xxxii 15), buried two large stones in Tahpanhes (xliii 8-13), and made a yoke which he carried on his own neck and shoulders (xxvii 1-15). In each case the symbol was connected with a prophetic word. Hananiah responded to the yoke symbol with his own symbolic breaking of Jeremiah's yoke and prophetic word in Jer. xxviii 1-4.

The second major socio-historical determinant on the prophetic orthodoxy of the late 7th century B.C. was "royal theology." This ideological and theological perspective, which had its roots in the Davidic covenant (II Sam. vii 4-17; xxiii 1-7; etc.) and stressed such doctrines as God's eternal covenant with David and his choice of Zion and its temple as his earthly dwelling, became the unquestioned touchstone of theological credibility used by the prophets and people of Jeremiah's day.

Little is recorded of what might have been said by the prophets other than Jeremiah concerning sacral kingship.

Hananiah, in his prophecy concerning the restoration of the Temple accoutrements and the return from Babylon of the first wave of exiles, also mentions that "Jeconiah son of Jehoiakim king of Judah" would return. It is likely that this is meant as an affirmation of the expectations concerning the Davidic throne. Perhaps the central reason why so little is recorded about the prevailing understanding of sacral kingship apart from the words of Jeremiah himself, is that in this case Jeremiah's message was generally in accord with the expectation of his contemporaries. Several times, Jeremiah refers to the throne of David (Jer. xiii 13; xxii 2, 4, 30; xxiii 5; xxx 9; xxxiii 15-26) in a manner which assumes that this is the rightful description of kingship in Judah. Furthermore, he affirms the eternal covenant which God had made with David and indicates that in the time of restoration, God would tear off the bonds of the people's enslavement so that they could instead ". . . serve the Lord their God and David their king whom I will raise up for them" (xxx 9). This idea is developed further in xxxiii 17-26, although in this case the passage is completely lacking in the LXX and may well be a later addition. As it stands in the MT, however, the verses indicate that there would always be a successor to David. The reliability and durability of this promise is attached to the covenant of creation (in this case, the "covenant with the day and the covenant with the night"--vs. 20) and to the covenant with Abraham (which is alluded to in the phrase "as countless as

the stars of the sky and as measureless as the sand on the seashore"--vs. 22). In addition, the perpetuity of the Davidic line is also linked to the eternal covenant with the Levitical priesthood. This is the only place in the Book of Jeremiah where the restoration of the priesthood is mentioned, but in this context it is an interesting indication of the ideological propinquity of the concepts of kingship and priesthood.

The most intriguing verses occur in Jer. xxiii 5, 6 which is another prophecy concerning the restoration. These verses are repeated with minor variations in wording and emphasis in xxxiii 15, 16. Again, in this latter context they are wholly lacking in the LXX. The verses indicate that, at an undisclosed time (הִנֵּה יָמִים בָּאִים --"Behold, days are coming"), God would raise up an ideal king of Davidic lineage. He is called the צֶמַח צַדִּיק which is most generally translated as "righteous shoot/branch," suggesting the image of new life springing from what looks like a dead tree. In later literature, the term became a technical expression for the expected king (Zech. iii 8; iv 12; cf. Targ. which renders it here as מְשִׁיחָא דְצַדִּיקָא "Righteous Messiah"). But the phrase may also mean "true shoot" to distinguish this coming king from the representatives of the Davidic dynasty of Jeremiah's day who failed to exhibit the true qualities of kingship (cf. Jer. xxii). In either case, this would be a king who would "rule and act with insight" (וּמָלַךְ מֶלֶךְ וְהִשְׂכִּיל); he would "do justice and right in the

land" (וְעָשָׂה מִשְׁפָּט וּצְדָקָה בָּאָרֶץ). The ultimate result would be an age of liberation (this is the force of the verb תְּוֻשָּׁע --vs. 6) and security (בֶּטַח).

This entire pericope has its roots in the formulaic expressions of divine sonship of the Davidic king which became the established ideological stream in Judah roughly from the time of Solomon onwards. Predominant expressions of this concept are seen in II Sam. vii 14-16; Ps. lxxxix 20-38; Isa. ix 5; Ps. ii 7; etc., all of which emphasize the eternal, unconditional relationship of father and son, rather than the more conditional relationship of a covenant, which was limited in time and scope and qualified by stipulations. The house of David was chosen by eternal decree and nothing could permanently alter that fact.[38]

But this very assurance in the late 7th century had also fostered a complacent attitude on the part of the people and prophets concerning the ruling kings of the day. While Jeremiah accepted the orthodoxy of sacral kingship, he would not tolerate the moral and ethical laxity of those who held the office. In Jer. xxii, the prophet speaks out against the kings of Judah who are in violation of the Deuteronomic covenant. The Davidic throne is not in jeopardy in this chapter, but those who sit on that throne must ". . . do what is just and right; rescue from the hand of his oppressor the one who has been robbed; do no wrong or violence to the alien, the fatherless or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place. . ." (vs. 3) if they

are to retain that throne. The composition of chapter xxii is complex, but this seems to be the message of both the poetry and the prose transition sections.

The intriguing thrust of Jeremiah's prophecies against the specific kings of Judah, is that while they preserve the ideology of sacral kingship, they also call into question the inviolability of Jerusalem. Like sacral kingship, the choice of Zion and the Temple as God's earthly abode was thought to be eternal, and, therefore, Jerusalem was considered by many as especially protected by Yahweh. Typical expressions of this view can be seen in passages like Jer. xxi 13b. The verse opens with a statement addressed to a second person singular feminine pronoun which must refer to the city of Jerusalem, even though the pronouns in vss. 12-14 undergo some unusual shifts.[39] While the topography mentioned is also somewhat problematic, the second part of the verse is undoubtedly an expression of the safety which the inhabitants of Jerusalem expected: "Who can descend upon us? And who can enter our lairs?" (מִי-יֵחַת עָלֵינוּ וּמִי יָבוֹא בְּמְעוֹנוֹתֵינוּ).[40] The expected answer to this rhetorical question was "No one, of course," but Jeremiah proclaimed that God would ". . . send destroyers against you, each man with his weapons, and they will cut up your fine cedar beams and throw them into the fire" (xxii 7; cf. xxi 14). An even more dramatic statement on the part of the prophet was that God would ". . . make this house like Shiloh and this city an object of cursing among all the

nations of the earth" (xxvi 6). This so enraged the people that they nearly put Jeremiah to death--an indication of how strongly held was this view of the security of God's Holy Hill.

In an expanded form, Jeremiah's conflict with the people over the assumed security which the Temple provided is best witnessed in Jer. vii 2-15, the so-called "Temple Sermon." Although this prose passage probably does not reflect the ipsissima verba of the prophet, it is undoubtedly an accurate portrayal of both his message and the ideological presuppositions of the late 7th century. In essence, the view of the people was that, since "This is the Temple of the Lord!" (הֵיכַל יהוה --vii 4), they could come and stand before this house which bore God's name and say, "We are safe" (נִצָּלְנוּ --vii 10). Not so, said Jeremiah. Safety came with covenant obedience, not by virtue of the simple presence of the Temple. God could just as easily abandon this place as he had Shiloh (vss. 12-14).

But the concept of God's election of Zion was very well established in the people. The tradition can be seen most clearly in the Songs of Zion (Pss. xlvi, xlviii, lxxvi). All three of these Psalms relate to the defeat of enemy armies which attacked Jerusalem. The actual historic reference of the poems is obscured by the majestic language of the armies' rout at the hands of the God of Jacob, but the emotional and ideological impact is clear. The prophet Isaiah may be attributed with the cementing of the theme in

the hearts of the people, both because it became a central element in his writing (cf. Isa. xvii 12-14; xiv 24-32; x 27-34; xxx 27-33; etc.), and because of his accurate prophecy concerning the eleventh-hour salvation of Jerusalem from the armies of Sennacherib in 688 B.C.[41] (II Kings viii 17-xix 37; cf. Isa. xxxvi f.). The pattern of security seen often in Isaiah's writings is, in this latter instance, dramatically illustrated. The enemy comes with violence and power to Zion, but Yahweh intervenes with his own terrifying power and destroys the enemy at the very gates of the city without even a battle on the part of the people.[42] In the late seventh century, the people were confident that this would be God's response against the powerful Nebuchadnezzar as well.

While Jeremiah spoke out against this belief in Yahweh's unconditional defense of the Temple, he should not be viewed as breaking entirely with the ideological orthodoxy of his day. He continued to refer to the Temple as "Yahweh's House" (xii 7), the place that "bears his name" (vii 10, 11, 14, 30). It was in the Temple where one "stood before the face of Yahweh" (vii 10; xxxiv 15), since this was God's spiritual dwelling, the "throne of his glory" (xiv 21; xvii 12). The Temple was no less important to God, but the wickedness of the people and the false uses to which God's house had been put (vii 11) meant that the people would be destroyed despite the presence of the Temple. But one day they would also return: "Come, let us go up to Zion,

to the Lord our God" (Jer. xxxi 6; cf. xxx 18). Whereas the prophets of his day rigidly maintained a Zion ideology which focused on the external and material, Jeremiah asserted that the doctrine as practiced was leading the people to empty formalism and ultimately divine destruction.

In addition to the influence of the canonical prophets of the previous centuries and the Zion and David ideology, a third great socio-historical influence on the prophetic movement of the late 7th century was the Deuteronomic tradition, which was in its ascendency during and following the reform of Josiah (ca. 629/8 B.C. with the "Book of the Covenant" discovered in the Temple in 622). While the covenant of Moses is obviously fundamental in the thinking of Jeremiah and the Deuteronomistic "style" of the book is evident, it remains to be demonstrated that the Deuteronomic tradition had a wider influence beyond the prophet Jeremiah.

An examination of all of the statements by and about the prophets who were contemporary with Jeremiah suggests that they had been influenced by the Josianic reform and gave lip-service to the Deuteronomic covenant, but little more. They did indeed enjoy the renewed popularity and centrality of the Temple, as well as the emphasis on God's love for his people and his gracious gift of the land. They were probably more in demand with the renewed emphasis upon cultic formalities. There is some indication that they had an understanding (however selective) of the Deuteronomic prophetic model. Deut. xviii 14-22, states that "God would

raise up for you a prophet like me [Moses] from among your own brothers and you must listen to him" (vs. 15). The prophet is viewed as the intermediary between God and mankind, speaking the word of Yahweh since the people cannot bear to hear God's voice directly. God would give the prophet words (vs. 18), and would call to account anyone who did not listen to the prophet (vs. 19). Statements like these provided the authority for the prophets of Jeremiah's day. Anyone who wanted to be obedient to the covenant must listen to the ones who spoke in God's name. Thus in Jer. xxvi 16, the people recoil at the idea that Jeremiah should be killed since ". . . he has spoken to us in the name of the Lord our God." The phrase which is used recalls specifically the Deuteronomic language. But during the same instance, the other prophets and priests may also be appealing to the Deuteronomic law by suggesting that Jeremiah be put to death. This is the punishment indicated in Deut. xviii for anyone who speaks by some other god. Of course, this is not what Jeremiah did. His "crime" was prophesying against the city, but in the parlance of Zion ideology, this could easily have been construed as coming from a source other than Yahweh. Jeremiah makes use of the Deuteronomy passage in his confrontation with Hananiah by suggesting that the authentication of the prophet and his prophecy will be established only ". . . if his prediction comes true" (Jer. xxviii 9). Jeremiah limits this test to those ". . . who prophesy peace . . ." which is not the case

in Deut. xviii 22, where the application is to any proclamation, but the concept is the same. Jeremiah's reference is apparently accepted by Hananiah and the listening audience, as indicated by the fact that, rather than choosing to debate the point, Hananiah proceeds to emphasize his prediction through symbolic action.

A further indication that the prophets of Jeremiah's day had a knowledge of the Deuteronomic covenant comes from the straightforward way in which Jeremiah applies this material in his negative assessment of the prophetic movement. For the most part, his criticisms are drawn directly from Deuteronomic prohibitions. It is "appalling" to see priests and prophets behave as they were doing, precisely because they should know better. The covenant gives them ample warning. For example, Jeremiah condemns the prophets for their adultery (Jer. xxiii 10, 14; cf. Deut. v 18), for prophesying by Baal and worshiping idols and astronomical bodies (Jer. ii 8; xxiii 13; viii 2; cf. Deut. xviii 20; xvi 21-xvii 7), and for prophesying "false visions, worthless divinations, and delusions of their own minds" (Jer. xiv 14; xxix 8; cf. Deut. xviii 10, 14). In addition, he castigates them for godless and wicked behaviour (Jer. xxiii 11, 14), for living deceitfully (xxiii 14; vi 13; viii 10), for being greedy for gain (vi 13; viii 10), and for leading others astray either through their example (xxiii 13, 32) or through their failure to deter the people from evil (xxiii 17, 22). Note the use of covenant

curse formulae in Jeremiah's proclamations against the prophets (cf. Jer. xxxiii 10, 12, 15, 39, 40; etc.).

The conclusion that we can make from the internal evidence is that the prophets of the late 7th century were affected by the Deuteronomic covenant by virtue of its impact on institutional religion and its superficial acceptance within the culture. However, in the actual practice of their vocation, they appear to be more concerned with fulfilling the expectations of the people (cf. xxix 8, 9) for a "word", for intercession, and for healing/peace, than they are with obedience. The ideology of David and Zion, which included the promise of security, was far more advantageous as a basis of their proclamation and theological self-understanding than the covenant of Moses which imposed rigorous obedience by the threat of curses.

Jeremiah and "Prophetic Orthodoxy"

From the preceding, we may now draw something of a composite portrait of what I have called the "prophetic orthodoxy" of the late seventh century as revealed in the Book of Jeremiah. The portrait is admittedly sketchy due to the limited descriptions which are available, but the outlines at least are distinct. The prophets of Jeremiah's day saw themselves as standing in a long tradition of respected personae. Their office was an honorable one, made so by the popular esteem in which their predecessors were held, especially during periods of Yahwistic renewal.

Theirs was the office of Moses, Samuel, Elijah, and Isaiah, who, along with Micah, Amos, Hosea and others had left a rich tradition as spokesmen for Yahweh, proclaiming messages of judgment and salvation in forms and motifs which had become well-established. They were related to the Temple by virtue of the fact that their roles intersected with other spiritual, social, and political services with which the cult was involved. But whether they can be considered cultic functionaries cannot be determined.[43] I believe that it is significant that they are not listed among the Temple leadership or personnel in either the closing chapters of II Kings or II Chronicles, in spite of the attention that is given to other cultic offices in these accounts of the Josianic reform and the final years before the Exile.

Prophets in this era were expected to discharge service in three primary capacities. As messengers of God, they delivered solicited and unsolicited oracles which were represented as the word of God--God's perspective--in a given area of corporate or individual life. There were apparently several acceptable modes by which the prophets received God's word derived both from the witness of the prophetic tradition (e.g. dreams and visions) and from the pagan practices of Canaanite culture (divination and appeal to Baal). As intercessors, they stood before God to represent the concerns and confessions of the people and to win for them God's שָׁלוֹם . Finally, in connection with this latter role, they were expected to announce God's word of

peace and reassurance. The basis of their hope was the David and Zion ideology which had flourished in Jerusalem for nearly three hundred years, which had withstood the test of the Assyrian invasion 100 years earlier, and which presumably promised an eternal security for the Temple, the throne, and the people who lived within the shadow of these institutions upon which God had placed his Name.

Jeremiah did not enter his prophetic vocation isolated from these expectations of the office. On the contrary, the "prophetic orthodoxy" of his day permeated his concept and presuppositions regarding his role. To begin with, he was raised in an atmosphere in which he had an extensive exposure to both the prophetic tradition of the past and the cult of his day. Born into a priestly family from Anathoth (3 miles northeast of Jerusalem), he was undoubtedly exposed early to the responsibilities of the priests, as well as to the great traditions of Israel's faith and the sayings of earlier prophets. It would seem to be a reasonable conjecture that his training was both traditional and conservative, perhaps with a greater emphasis than usual for a child living so close to Jerusalem on the covenantal theology and Mosaic emphasis which had flourished in the northern kingdom.[44] He would have been quite familiar as well with the activities and traditions surrounding the cultus in Jerusalem. While little information is available concerning his childhood, he undoubtedly had exposure to the style, prophecies, and cultural patterns which were typical

in relation to the prophets in Jerusalem.

Although Jeremiah can be seen on many occasions criticizing the cultus, he was no enemy of the externals of religious observance understood in appropriate perspective. As we have seen, he supported the ideology which held that the Temple had a special function in conveying God's grace to Israel, although it would not provide them security in the absence of obedience. The inference of passages such as Jer. xxxiii 11 is clearly that the Temple would have a place in the restoration of Zion (cf. xxxi 6, 12). Furthermore, although Jeremiah railed against the abuse of the sacrificial system, sabbath observance, circumcision, etc., it cannot be demonstrated exegetically that he was opposed to any of these aspects of Yahwism as such, but only to their misuse when people put their trust in the tradition rather than in the God to whom the externals were to give witness.[45]

Again, like the other prophets of his day, he saw himself as a spokesman for God, utilizing traditional forms and motifs for his oracles (though in a uniquely lyrical style and often employing unconventional elements). He interceded for the people, both at their request and at his own initiative, and both in a personal style and in the manner of a cultic, corporate confession. And, while he was most often called by God to the very lonely task of declaring judgment in the face of others who offered a word of peace, he also was allowed to bring the word of healing

when it was appropriate (cf. Jer. xxiii 1-7; xxx 5-7, 10-22; xxxi 3-14; xxxii 36-44; etc.). Likewise, when he was commanded by God to do so, he delivered oracles against the enemy nations, which, by inference, were also words of peace for Israel.

What I am suggesting is that in order to fully appreciate Jeremiah's struggle within his prophetic vocation, we must understand the solidarity with which he stood with the traditions surrounding that office and with those who exercised the office in relation to the people of his day. His self-disclosures, as we shall see, can be viewed as his private and public expressions of pain, as the prophetic orthodoxy of the 7th century, which was a part of his own foundation, was crumbling under the weight of the unfolding call of God on his life and was giving way to the establishment of a new prophetic identity, which included suffering as an essential element.

THE SELF-DISCLOSURES OF JEREMIAH

When speaking of the "prophetic self-disclosures," I am including material which is essentially autobiographical--passages in which the prophet's personal responses and feelings are directly stated by the prophet himself, rather than by a biographer writing in the third person. This corpus of material is much broader than those passages commonly known as the "confessions." The sections are not always easy to identify, since they have often been appended to various other oracles. In addition the prophet's suffering is frequently associated with the pathos of Yahweh,[1] and, therefore, it is not always clear where a given text represents the speech of the prophet or a divine proclamation.[2] The following two chapters include a brief commentary and summary of the self-disclosures (apart from the "call narrative" which will be treated separately) with an evaluation as appropriate of each text in terms of its content and construction, its form and genre, its theme, and its exegetically distinctive elements. As far as possible within the limitations of the purpose here, I will establish the text and survey the ancient versions. In relation to verses which are particularly critical to our discussion, the commentary will be more lengthy.

The passages may be conveniently divided into three sections, as follows:

I. Elements of the Prophetic Vocation
   A. Response to the scope of the prophetic vision
      iv 19-22; iv 23-26; v 1-9; cf. xxiii 9, 10
   B. Vocational response to obduracy
      v 12-14; vi 9-11; vi 27-30
   C. Response to personal identification with the people
      viii 18-ix 1 [Eng. ix 2]
   D. Response to personal loss
      x 19-25
   E. Intercession
      xiv 1-16; xiv 17-xv 4; also note iii 24, 25

II. The Prophet's Complaints or Didactic Dialogue
   A. Response to persecution
      xi 18-23
   B. "Why do the wicked prosper?" xii 1-6
   C. "Why is my pain perpetual?" xv 10-21
   D. "Where is the Word of the Lord?" xvii 12-18
   E. "Should good be repaid with evil?" xviii 18-23
   F. "Have you deceived me?" xx 7-13

III. The Prophet's Despair
      xx 14-18

The first major category of Jeremianic self-disclosures includes a variety of texts in which the prophet pours out his feelings in relation to various experiences which he encounters in the course of the exercise of his vocation. Frequently these passages are found in relation to texts which would have been a likely setting. However, the connection between the material and the context has not always been accepted by the commentators, not only because of critical considerations, but also because of the assumption that many of these statements were not meant to be public. Rather, the conjecture is made that these were

either private comments made to friends and later added to the compilation of the text as seemed appropriate, or they were asides uttered sotto voce.[3] Regardless of how the materials came to be placed, they each deal with the prophet's response to some aspect of his task and the effect is to build a background of suspense for the series of extended dialogues with Yahweh which will follow. Thus we are never far from the personal issues from chapter i onwards. They are kept alive for us. I will deal with each reference separately as to the authenticity of its context.

Jeremiah iv 19-22

This passage of self-disclosure along with the next several are set within the context of a collection of oracles dealing with divine judgment (iv 5-vi 30). It is probably fitting that this lengthy section of the book follows the rebukes and the pleas for repentance in chapters ii - iii. Jer. iv 3-4 offers a suitable transition by indicating that unless the people turn wholeheartedly ("circumcise your hearts"), the wrath of Yahweh ". . . will break out and burn like fire because of the evil . . . burn with no one to quench it." Indeed, that is exactly the way that the judgment is presented--as complete devastation which cannot be controlled through human intervention. The specific dates of these oracles is uncertain. In all probability many of them were used by the prophet on several occasions beginning late in the reign of Josiah and

continuing well into the reign of Jehoiakim when the Babylonian threat was rapidly becoming the experience of warfare and defeat. The oracles are connected primarily through their theme, although some attempt has been made by the editors to order the material through an awareness of literary affinities and to supply transitions (cf. iv 10, 11; v 18). In Jer. iv 5-10, the alarm of impending war is sounded and the "destroyer of nations" (vs. 7) begins the march of destruction from the north. In Jer. iv 11-18, the imagery describing the approaching army becomes more vivid and intense. There is a plaintive exhortation to repentance in vs. 14, but it is all but lost in the tide of battle. Verse 18 stresses that it has been the conduct and actions of the people that have brought all of this. The verse closes with the exclamation: "This your misery is indeed bitter; it has touched your very heart" (זֹאת רָעָתֵךְ כִּי מָר כִּי נָגַע עַד-לִבֵּךְ).[4] The position of the self-disclosure of anguish which follows (vss. 19-22) is likely prompted by this reference to the internal effect of the judgment on his people.

The construction of the pericope includes the prophet's ejaculation of agony (vs. 19a), his vision of general destruction (vss. 19b, 20a), a statement of identification with the people through his own experience of ruin (vs. 20b), his woeful query (vs. 21), and Yahweh's response (vs. 22). These elements are not unlike many which are found in the so-called "confessions" and have prompted some

commentators to include this section under that designation.[5] The passage may indeed represent a private lament, perhaps uttered to a few friends at the time of the actual invasion, but Calvin has suggested that the prophet "seems not so much to mourn the calamities of the people, but employs figurative terms in order to awaken their stupor, for he saw that they were torpid, and that they neither feared God nor were touched with any shame."[6] There is no reason to assume that this section must belong to a later period in the prophet's career simply because of its eyewitness tone, especially since the section stands in the context of other proleptic visions.

Jeremiah iv 19 provides an excellent example of the intensity of the language employed by Jeremiah to describe his suffering, and, therefore, we will examine it at some length. It is also an excellent example of the interpretive character of the versions as they try to understand the nature of the prophet's anguish. Is the prophet simply speaking metaphorically? Were there physical manifestations of his intense emotions? Of course, we can never know in detail that experience which Jeremiah was attempting to describe, but a close examination of his vocabulary and his use of idiomatic expressions may shed some light on the interpretive process. The first two lines of the verse (in the MT) read like gasping, anguished ejaculations accompanying grave suffering.

The verse opens with a double cry: מֵעַי מֵעַי .

Kimchi suggests that double expletives of this type are customary as an exclamation for lament or pain. He offers II Kings iv 19 as an example: "My head, my head!" This was the cry of the Shunamite's son shortly before his death in reference to the intense physical pain of his illness. It is clear from his grammatical analogy and from his further explanation (see below) that Kimchi assumes this to be very physical pain indeed. The exclamation is not attested elsewhere in BH as an idiomatic expression of lament.

[מעה] (which appears in the MT only in various plural construct forms), however, does appear in certain other expressions which may be considered idiomatic in usage. Most notable of these are the occurrences of מעה with the verb המה . This verb, as we shall see, appears with several other nouns as well (לב as in line 2 of this verse and נפש as in Ps. xlii 6, 12) to create an idiom expressing intense inner turmoil. With forms of [מעה], it appears four times in the MT. In Jeremiah xxxi 20 (the only other occurrence of [מעה] in Jeremiah), God is speaking concerning the tension between the exercise of his righteous judgment and the expression of his deep love for Ephraim who is a "favored son." "Indeed, as often as I have spoken against him, I remember him; therefore, my inward parts groan for him (עַל-כֵּן הָמוּ מֵעַי לוֹ),[7] I must show him mercy." In this case the phrase is a metaphor (anthropomorphism) describing God's deep emotion of concern or love. A very similar occurrence, though descriptive of a

far more physical response, is in Song of Songs v 4, which states that when the lover "extended his hand through the opening, my inner parts groaned for him (וּמֵעַי הָמוּ עָלָיו)" --perhaps more idiomatically translated as "my feelings were aroused for him." Here the phrase describes an excitement or rapid intensification of emotion resulting (as in Jer. xxxi 20) from deep love. Another instance in which God is the subject of the expression is Isa. lxiii 15, the context of which is a prayer for mercy: הֲמוֹן מֵעֶיךָ וְרַחֲמֶיךָ אֵלַי הִתְאַפָּקוּ ("Your inner stirrings and your compassion are restrained toward me"). As in Jer. xxxi 20 this "inner stirring" seems to accompany or precede a manifestation of God's רחם (cf. Hos. xi 8). In Isa. xvi 11, the idiom is expanded: עַל-כֵּן מֵעַי לְמוֹאָב כַּכִּנּוֹר יֶהֱמוּ וְקִרְבִּי לְקִיר חָרֶשׂ ("Therefore my inward parts intone like a lyre for Moab, and my insides for Qîr-ḥeres"). Again, Yahweh is the speaker. But here two further elements appear. First, מֵעַי stands in parallel with קִרְבִּי , a word used very generally as an inward part of a person (the location of the רֶגֶשׁ in Isa. xix 3, the נֶפֶשׁ in I Kings xvii 21 and מַחְשָׁבוֹת in Jer. iv 14). This parallel adds evidence not only for a "general," metaphoric meaning for the idiom, but also for a more general, non-emotional use of [מעה].[8] Second, המה is modified by the expression כַּכִּנּוֹר . It is not clear whether the analogy being drawn is to the sound of the lyre (hence: "my inner parts moan like a lyre") or to the vibration of the strings of a lyre (hence: "my inner parts

are agitated like a lyre"), but in either case it is more of a persistent, intense feeling, rather than a painful one. In fact, in all four of these occurrences of [מעה] with המה this can be said to be the case. The emotion is intense, but it is one of love rather than suffering.

We noted at the beginning of this discussion that [מעה] occurs in several, rather idiomatic settings, of which only the most common has been mentioned. Job xxx 27 utilizes the word in a much more "painful" expression of anguish: מֵעַי רָתְחוּ וְלֹא-דָמּוּ ("my inner parts are brought to a boil and do not keep still"). This again is clearly an emotional state of high agitation and not a purely physical phenomenon, although the possibility is much greater in this case that the strong emotions have produced physical manifestations.[9] In Lam. i 20 and ii 11, מעי is used with still another verb, חמרמרו ("they are in ferment, deeply troubled, inflamed"), again expressing an intense state of grief with possible physical manifestations.[10]

The verb in closest proximity to מעי in Jer. iv 19 is not המה , but אחולא (K^{e}tîb) or אוחילה (Ḳ^{e}rê), which may complete a meaning much more akin to those just mentioned than with the more common idiomatic expression analyzed earlier. BDB, following the Ḳ^{e}rê suggests that the root in view here could be יחל (H) meaning "to wait for, hope."[11] However, there is no support either in the context or in the versions for this suggestion. Much more likely is that the verb is derived from חול or חיל meaning "to

twist or writhe."[12] This root is often used to describe a state of severe anguish or pain. In Jer. v 22, Yahweh inquires as to whether the people fear (יראו) him and whether they "writhe" or "tremble" (חיל) in his presence. Deut. ii 25 describes the "dread" (פַּחַד) and "fear" (יִרְאָה) which people everywhere will have concerning Israel, and suggests that "when they hear the report of you, they shall tremble and be in severe anguish (וְרָגְזוּ וְחָלוּ מִפָּנֶיךָ) before you." Other examples of this usage could be quoted.[13] It is interesting to note that, in the case of Deut. ii 25 and Isa. xxiii 5, the anguish comes as a result of a report which is heard. This is also the context here. Joel ii 6 describes another physical symptom along with the anguish as כָּל-פָּנִים קִבְּצוּ פָּאר ("all faces flush; lit.: "gather heat"). Rashi takes up this interpretation of trembling by glossing אוחילה with חיל ורחת . Another group of texts associates חיל or חול with the writhing anguish experienced in childbirth. Especially interesting for us are those in which the image is used as an analogy for intense emotion (e.g. Jer. vi 24; iv 31; l 43; Isa. xiii 8; xxvi 17, 18; Micah iv 10, cf. 9). In Jer. iv 31, the analogy is drawn between the cry of anguish of a woman in labor and the lament of Jerusalem as she is destroyed.[14] Jeremiah vi 24 describes the reaction of the people as a report is brought concerning the army coming from the north: רָפוּ יָדֵינוּ צָרָה הֶחֱזִקַתְנוּ חִיל כַּיּוֹלֵדָה ("Our hands go limp; anguish has seized us; pain like a woman in childbirth").[15] It is

this interpretation of חיל that Kimchi chooses to explain Jeremiah's lament. Indeed it is attractive because of the juxtaposition of מעי , which is used for "womb" in several passages (e.g. Ps. lxxi 6; Ruth i 11; Isa. xlix 1; Gen. xxv 23), although this is the only occurrence of the two words together. Kimchi wants the opening words to stand together with the sense: "I cry from the pain of my bowels--which is to say, labor pains have seized me and there is pain in my bowels because of the disaster (trouble) brought upon us." Though the vocabulary in Isa. xxi 3 is slightly different, the context and imagery are quite similar. The prophet responds to a "dire vision" (verse 2) with the exclamation: "At this my body is racked with pain, pangs seize me, like those of a woman giving birth (עַל-כֵּן מָלְאוּ מָתְנַי חַלְחָלָה צִירִים אֲחָזוּנִי כְּצִירֵי יוֹלֵדָה)." Modern commentators have also frequently proposed this interpretation suggesting that childbirth was only casually concealed from public display and that Jeremiah would have been familiar with the experience and thus acquired the image.[16] Muilenburg also notes Jeremiah's preoccupation with the mystery and perplexity of his own birth, and notes that this terminology is all but absent in the Baruch prose narratives, giving credence to the unique Jeremianic flavor of the imagery.[17]

The versions also take these opening words as a unit, rather than individual ejaculations, but in each case the possible connection with the image of childbirth is ignored. The words are rendered in the more general sense of "I am

pained in my bowels" or "my bowels, my bowels are hurting me."[18]

Despite the less colorful rendering of the versions, it seems likely that the poet was aware of the rich variety of meanings associated with the vocabulary which he chose. [מעה] is used in the MT to denote both the interior of a person generally or various specific parts of the internal anatomy (bowels, stomach, womb, etc.). It is frequently used in idiomatic expressions to describe an emotional, internal response.[19] But rather than combining it with המה (as he did in xxxi 20), Jeremiah has intentionally chosen here a verb expressing much greater turmoil--a verb which also can be readily associated with several meanings of [מעה] to combine the images of emotional and physical suffering. It does not seem likely (even to the Greek and Latin translators who, as we shall see, tend to minimize the physical aspects of the prophet's suffering) that these opening words are merely an expression of "inner groaning" or "spiritual agitation." Rather they are an expression of a "writhing discomfort" on both the physical and emotional plane which could even mirror the anguish of childbirth.

While the versions uniformly render the first colon of the verse (though somewhat more generally, perhaps, than the language may warrant), it is the next colon, קִירוֹת לִבִּי , which was more problematic for interpretation. The Hebrew words are clear enough ("the walls of my heart"), but the phrase stands rather unsupported by its context.[20] Further-

more, this is the only occurrence of this phrase in the Old Testament. LXX renders קירות with αἰσθητήρια meaning "the senses" or "organs of sense." This Greek word is also employed in IV Macc. ii 22 to mean the "medium of the senses" or "the faculties." But the word is not used elsewhere in the OT, though the related αἴσθησις indicating a "perception by the senses" is frequent, especially in Proverbs where it translates מְזִמָּה some 20 times. Here in Jeremiah, the phrase (taken along with the first colon as indicated by the καὶ which has no equivalent in the MT) means: "I am suffering (pained) in my bowels and the senses (or sense powers) of my heart." LXX interprets Jeremiah's experience of suffering as an internal one resulting from his premonition of devastating events. He has not actually seen or heard the events and, thus, his eyes and ears (the external sense organs) cannot be "pained," but his internal "senses" can. No doubt, LXX has been influenced by the last line of the verse which the translators understood as reading: "My soul has heard the sound of the trumpet . . ." The two lines are, thus, complementary, each relating to the internal awareness of events, which, though not yet actualized, are "real" enough to cause the prophet deep anguish. The Vulg. suggests a similar interpretation, although in this case the phrase is combined with the following colon (המה-לי לבי) by omitting the latter לבי . Thus it reads: "The senses of my heart are troubled within me." Again the emphasis is on an

internal perception bringing emotional pain. Targum Jonathan (Targ.) adds a verb in order to interpret the rather cryptic Hebrew. This interpretation reads: "The support of my heart is shaking (or trembling; cf. Targ. of Jer. iv 24)." The Targ. focuses on the more physical aspects of Jeremiah's suffering by interpreting the first two lines of the verse almost as a list of symptoms. His bowels are causing him pain, that which supports his heart trembles, and his heart pounds (or rumbles) and will not be still. Like the LXX, the Pesh. connects קירות with that which precedes it, but like the Targ. it renders קירות in a physical way. Thus the line reads: ". . . my bowels are painful to me and my heartstrings." Presumably ܫܕܝܬܐ, taken from the root ܫܕܐ ("to suspend"), indicates some physical or anatomical apparatus for suspending the heart, and roughly corresponds with the Aramaic סִמְפּוֹנְיָה . The Pesh., however, does not place the word in a construct relationship to "my heart," but gives it its own possessive pronoun. "My heart" is then left to stand alone, perhaps as an equivalent exclamation to "my bowels." Kimchi assumes that the verb ("I writhe") is to be understood as relating to both "my bowels" and "the walls of my heart." The physical manifestations of the prophet's suffering are extensive.

It is interesting to note that it is the non-Semitic versions which move away from an anatomical interpretation of "my heart," viewing the phrase metaphorically as the seat of emotional perception. The Semitic versions, on the other

hand, see קירות as a genuinely physical description.[21] Jeremiah's whole body is physically responding to his emotional suffering. This tendency within the various interpretations of the versions can be demonstrated further in the manner in which the next line is translated as we shall see.

The first colon of line two in the MT reads הֹמָה-לִּי לִבִּי. We have already noted the idiomatic expression in which המה is utilized with [מעה] as an expression of deep emotion often connected with love (cf. Jer. xxxi 20; Isa. xvi 11; lxiii 15; Cant. v 4). As in this instance, however, it is also found with לב . In Jer. xlviii 36 the expression לִבִּי . . . כַּחֲלִלִים יֶהֱמֶה appears twice as Yahweh laments the end of Moab and the men of Qîr-ḥeres (cf. Isa. xvi 11). As in the case of the "lyre" in Isa. xvi 11, it is not certain what kind of "flute sound" is in view here. "Flutes" elsewhere in the OT always appear on occasions of joy and celebration (cf. I Sam. x 5; I Kings i 40; Isa. v 12; xxx 29), but they may have also been used in time of lament (producing a moaning or wailing sound).[22] Whatever the sound, the phrase is an expression of heart-felt grief. נפש appears as the subject of המה in Ps. xlii 6, 12 and xliii 5. In these passages, the Psalmist addresses his soul asking why it is "restless" or "disturbed."[23] This expression seems very like those employing לב as the subject, but here there can be no confusion as to whether המה refers to a particular sound or, rather, a state of being. It seems quite likely that the phrases המה לבי ,

המה מעי , and המה נפשי (as found in various forms) should be viewed together as expressions of emotional being. To these might be added the occurrences of המה in Ps. lxxvii 4 and lv 18 where it occurs in the first person form in parallel with שיח ("to complain").[24] As in Jeremiah, the context in both cases is a deep sense of trouble and confusion. המה may refer to a murmuring sound, or merely a restless agony, but it is the emotional state which is preeminent rather than the character of the sound in either case. In fact, Ps. lxxvii 5b suggests that the Psalmist is so troubled that he cannot speak (נִפְעַמְתִּי וְלֹא אֲדַבֵּר), which is the opposite response to that which we encounter in Jeremiah, but is equally as plausible given the circumstances of each poet (the Psalmist silent before God; Jeremiah compelled to speak presumably to the people).

The sense of the phrase, evaluated in light of this evidence, focuses on the emotional turmoil of the prophet. Bright may be very close to the meaning by translating "my heart is in storm within me."[25] Of course, this is not to minimize the rich diversity in the usage of המה in passages beyond those mentioned. המה (or המון) is used to describe a great variety of sounds and accompanying conditions which produce those sounds.[26] As in the first line, this rich multiplicity in the shade of meaning that the word enjoys makes it especially useful to the poet, but far more difficult for the interpreters (as the ancient versions readily demonstrate).

Before moving on to the versions, we might note that there is a certain ambiguity arising not only from the vocabulary employed here, but also from the grammatical construction. In Jer. xlviii 36, לְ is utilized in one instance and אֶל in the other to denote that for which lament is raised. (Thus, "my heart wails/moans like a flute <u>for</u> Moab . . . for the men of Qîr-ḥeres.") In Ps. xlii 6, 12 and xliii 5, it is עַל which follows המה (עָלָי = "within me" or, perhaps, "because of me" meaning "because of my situation"). These passages do not provide very clear grammatical guidance for understanding the exact meaning of the לְ construction in Jer. iv 19. It is likely that the prepositional phrase means "within me" (equivalent to עָלָי in Ps. xlii 6), though following Jer. xlviii 36 it could also mean "for me."

Let us turn now to the ancient versions which again have been rather interpretive due to both the richness and ambiguity of the Hebrew phrase. LXX, without support from the other versions, reads two phrases here rather than one: μαιμάσσει ἡ ψυχή μου ("my soul is in turmoil"), σπαράσσεται ἡ καρδία μου ("my heart is rent"). Both verbs are rare in the OT and neither is used elsewhere to translate המה . The first element of the "doublet" does not appear in Symmachus, leading Ziegler to suggest that the second element actually originated with Symmachus and eventually made its way into the Greek text.[27] Ziegler concludes, however that a clear solution is not possible.

Rudolph (BHS), Ziegler, and Janzen all suggest that נפשׁי, which appears in line 3 as a vocative in the MT, is secondary (on the basis that the line is metrically overloaded) and should belong in some relation to the line here in question.[28] Janzen proposes an Ur-text to this effect, but it is embarassing to his theory that ἡ ψυχή μου appears in both lines in LXX.[29] Certainly, his argument, in the absence of any corroborating evidence from the other versions for displacing נפשׁי, is not particularly compelling, and it seems more judicious to read with the MT despite the irregular poetic line. The interpretation which the LXX offers in its doublet form continues the idea of internal conflict brought about by the vision "sensed" by the heart and "heard" by the soul in lines 1 and 3. The phrases in line 2 are thoroughly metaphoric without any actual, physical symptoms necessary. The soul is in chaos--the heart is torn--though neither image expresses a physical reality, but only an emotional one. This same idea is also present in the Vulg. which has combined the first colon of line 2 with line 1 with the omission of the second לבי as has already been observed. In the Targ. and Pesh., however, the physical manifestations are clear. The Targ. reads: "My heart within me pounds (המי) and will not be silent." That an actual noise is in view in the Aramaic cognate for Hebrew המה is clear from the fact that the verb of the second colon of the line appears in the third person singular form and refers to "heart" as its subject.

The MT, LXX and Vulg. all preserve the first person singular, but the Pesh. reads with the Targ.: "My heart palpitates (صعد or "skips, dances") within me and will not keep silent." Both the Targ. and Pesh. are apparently concerned specifically with the physical effects of the prophet's anguish. His is not merely a psychological distress, but a physical distress as well, and he cannot bring his bodily reactions (i.e. the pounding of his heart and the pains of his bowels) under control. Kimchi reflects this same emphasis in his comment, while not moving so far as to emend the final verb of line 2: "And if I say, 'I will shout now but I will keep silent then,' my heart still pounds. לֹא אחריש (MT): I am not able to keep silent for my heart pounds continuously within me."

Kimchi's comment begs the question as to whether לֹא אַחֲרִישׁ refers to the prophet's inability to silence his body's reaction to his vision, his inability to bear his suffering in silence, or his inability to contain the vision itself (cf. Jer. xx 9). An interesting parallel of imagery occurs in Isa. xlii 14: הֶחֱשֵׁיתִי מֵעוֹלָם אַחֲרִישׁ אֶתְאַפָּק / כַּיּוֹלֵדָה אֶפְעֶה אֶשֹּׁם וְאֶשְׁאַף יָחַד ("I have been inactive for a long time,[30] keeping silent and restraining myself; like a woman in labor I will groan, I will both moan and gasp"). Here, Yahweh speaks of his own restraint and silence during the long years during which he "has seemed to Israel to do nothing, the years in which Israelites have thought themselves deserted by their God."[31] But soon, like a woman

who suddenly finds herself in labor, all restraint will vanish and all of creation will be aware of God's activity. Childbirth provides the picture of an event where restraint is no longer possible. Through intense pain, a new child is issued forth. The world round about witnesses <u>both</u> the groans of pain and the child which is born. In some ways, Jer. iv 19 may be analagous. Jeremiah had been told of the devastation which was to come as a result of God's judgment, but now the destruction appeared imminent. Jeremiah had received a disturbing premonition of what was to come. He had heard the alarm of war proclaiming the disaster. And the vision had produced in him such intense emotions that he was like a woman writhing in childbirth. And like Yahweh in Isa. xlii, he could not restrain himself any longer. The world would hear his pain <u>and</u> the message which caused the pain.[32] In this interpretation it is not necessary to choose between the alternative meanings which are possible. All three are in view. The prophet cannot silence his body's reactions any more than a woman can silence her birth pangs.[33] Furthermore, he cannot bear in silence the suffering which the vision has caused him. And, finally, like a child which can no longer be contained in his mother's womb, the message must issue forth.

While this whole complex of meanings can stand together in the Hebrew, the Targ. and Pesh. specifically interpret the statement in reference to the heart which cannot be controled. (See above.) The LXX and Vulg., on the other

hand, seem to interpret the phrase as a reference to the prophet's compulsion to speak. This is indicated in both instances at least partially by the fact that the rendering of לא אחריש is to be construed with the vision which follows (beginning in line 3 and continuing through verse 26), rather than with that which precedes it. This is especially clear in the Latin, which divides the verse just before לא אחריש , thus beginning the second half of the verse with Non tacebo, quoniam . . .

This lengthy excursus with regard to the vocabulary and interpretation of verse 19 should make clear the unique character and intensity of Jeremiah's expression of suffering. What is reflected here is not a formulaic expression of grief, so much as it is a carefully constructed self-disclosure designed to have a maximum effect upon those who heard it. As is typical in the O.T., there is no distinction of the psychological from the physical. But, further, comparison of the vocabulary here and elsewhere also demonstrates that the usage of psychological terms is not systematic. As H. Wheeler Robinson has pointed out, the prophet saw himself

> . . . as an animated body with many parts, which could function in quasi-independence of one another, every physical organ having psychical and ethical attributes of its own. . . . He analyzed his consciousness (as far as he did analyze it) not into general faculties or abstract ideas, but into the more or less detached working of these different organs. . . .34

As we shall see, there are an amazing number of anatomical

terms which are used by Jeremiah to describe his own psychology.

The magnitude of the prophet's pain stems from two related sources which are noted within the succeeding lines. First, there is his vision of the destruction of the land in vs. 19b-20a. The prophet declares: "For you have heard the sound of the horn, O my soul, the alarm of war" (כִּי קוֹל שׁוֹפָר שָׁמַעַתְּ נַפְשִׁי תְּרוּעַת מִלְחָמָה). The ancient versions all read שָׁמַעַתְּ with the Kᵉrê, instead of שמעתי , thus making "my soul" the subject of the sentence rather than a vocative. Sperber suggests that the verb be read as a first person with the Kᵉtîb and that "my soul" be read as a parallel element with the next colon.[35] However, the verb can also be read as an archaic 2nd person singular feminine form which preserves the consonantal text and has precedence elsewhere in Jeremiah (cf. iv 30; ii 20; ii 33; iii 4, 5; xxxi 21; etc.).[36] The meaning which is derived from each of these solutions is similar. The use of the vocative, however, accentuates the idea of an internal vision, which is an interpretation supported by the LXX. In the opening colon of vs. 20, the prophet hears another sound, namely the report of the devastation as a result of the battle: "Ruin upon ruin is reported, for the whole land is devastated" (שֶׁבֶר עַל-שֶׁבֶר נִקְרָא כִּי שֻׁדְּדָה כָּל-הָאָרֶץ). שֶׁבֶר is a common word in Jeremiah, used in different ways to describe both personal and corporate brokenness, defeat, collapse, and ruin. The repeated use of the word serves to emphasize the

extensive effects of the disaster, the likes of which Rashi can only associate with the destruction of Jerusalem and the deportation at the time of Jehoiachin (597 B.C.). Kimchi suggests that the first "ruin" refers to Israel, and that now there is added the collapse of Judah. The LXX is apparently reading a slightly different text, attaching the first word of verse 20 with the previous colon and then indicating that "the sound of the battle and distress is called destruction" (κραυγὴν πολέμου καὶ ταλαιπωρία συντριμμὸν ἐπικαλεῖται). As in the case of the MT, the vocabulary indicates the extent of the destruction.[37]

The second source of the prophet's pain concerning his vision, is his keen identification with the people who would undergo the destruction. In the deliberately archaic, poetic language of vs. 20b (cf. x 20), Jeremiah utilizes the first person possessive pronoun twice in order to emphasize this point: "Without warning my tents are laid waste, in an instant my tent curtains" (פִּתְאֹם שֻׁדְּדוּ אָהָלַי רֶגַע יְרִיעֹתָי). Kimchi comments on the poetic language by saying that ". . . the grand houses and lofty fortresses are called 'tents' . . . which are easily destroyed, for like tents they are devastated suddenly and without warning."[38] Both the LXX and Pesh. read יגז as a second verb, presumably a Pual, but this interpretation is doubtful, since there is no evidence elsewhere for such a form.

In iv 21, the prophet raises a lamenting question, "How long will I see the signal pole and hear the sound of the

ram's horn[39]?" (עַד-מָתַי אֶרְאֶה-נֵּס אֶשְׁמְעָה קוֹל שׁוֹפָר). While the Targ. reflects the MT, the LXX, Pesh., and Vulg. read נֵּס as נָס ("fugitives"). The poetic imagery which results is forced and rough. Kimchi correctly explains the imagery: "The watchmen have as their practice to stand in high towers or on high hills in order to see the enemies coming. They raised the signal pole, which corresponds to what the people saw, and gave a blast on the trumpet which corresponds to what the people heard. In this way they were warned."

Kimchi further notes that Yahweh answers Jeremiah's query in vs. 22, which undoubtedly belongs with this pericope.[40] The words are a justification of the judgment which God is bringing. The devastation is appropriate and deserved, because the people are ". . . clever at doing evil, but know nothing about doing good." The root of the problem is that they do not "know" God. In language reminiscent of Hosea (cf. Hos. iv 1, 6, 22), this point is made emphatically: "**Me** they do not know" (אוֹתִי לֹא יָדָעוּ). The syntax adds force to the pronouncement. It is only the knowledge of God that makes people wise, and such wisdom comes only with thoroughgoing commitment. Without true understanding the people are "foolish" (סְכָלִים) and "stupid" (אֱוִילִ).[41]

In the proclamation of Yahweh's response, the prophet places his own feelings in the perspective of God's justice. In the tradition of the prophets who were called to bring a word of "peace" and "security" to the people, Jeremiah would

himself prefer to announce healing rather than devastation. The destruction of his people, means his destruction as well. He cannot bear the sight of his vision; neither can he keep silent about it. His prophetic vocation causes him the agony of sight, the agony of proclaiming doom, and the agony of undergoing ruin himself as a member of the community to whom he preaches.

Jeremiah iv 23-26

The vision which follows immediately is one of even more universal destruction. It is probably placed in this context because of its affinities with the proleptic vision of the desolation of the land. Indeed, Kimchi interprets this passage as a hyperbolic style of writing which Jeremiah uses because of the extensive nature of the devastation. When the prophet says that "all the birds of the heavens have flown away," for example, Kimchi indicates that it means that the birds have flown from the place of the battle, though not actually away from the land. Similarly, Berridge sees this section as descriptive of holy war with a completely historical reference. He notes that "During the course of a holy war terrifying changes took place in the natural sphere."[42] To support his interpretation, he cites the similarity of the terminology of vs. 25a with the ban ritual, the connection of רעש (vs. 24a) with holy war (cf. Isa. xiii 13; Josh. ii 10; Judg. v 4), and the similarity of vs. 25b with ix 9c which clearly depicts the aftermath of a

purely historical devastation.

In spite of the apparent need on the part of some commentators to define an historical referent, the striking imagery of this passage, which takes on cosmic proportions should not be overlooked. It is a vision which, for the prophet, indicates that the judgment which is coming will have ramifications far beyond the historically limited suffering of Judah. This is a vision of cosmic pain more vivid in its poetic simplicity than that expressed by any of Jeremiah's predecessors (cf. Isa. ii 12-21; xxiv 1-13; Hos. iv 3; etc.). Verse 23 consciously ties this passage with the creation story through the use of the phrase תֹּהוּ וָבֹהוּ ("formless void/primeval chaos")[43] and the absence of light (cf. Gen. i 2). Here that which God created in the beginning and gave to mankind is reversed. While verse 23 graphically sets the stage, the following verses portray the process of destruction. Vs. 24 represents the mountains and hills as being shaken. Elsewhere in the OT, these are the very elements of creation which illustrate stability (cf. Ps. cxxi). In vs. 25, even the people and animals are missing from the face of the earth. The phrase אֵין הָאָדָם ("there was no man") is found elsewhere in the MT only in Gen. ii 5 (reversed for syntactical emphasis), where it is a description of the reason for the earth's desolation.[44] In vs. 26, the fertility of the land (connected with the presence of mankind in Gen. ii and with restoration in Isa. xxxii 15) is also reversed, and it becomes a desert once

more. The cities, which are the only element in this vision not found in the creation account, simply "fall into ruins" (וַתִּנָּתֵצְנָה).[45] The passage highlights the stark emptiness of the land.

Underlying the entire passage is a kind of prophetic terror. This is in sharp contrast with the announcements of the Day of Yahweh which former prophets had declared, since here there is no sense of restoration. The vision of Isa. xxxii or Hos. xiv is not permitted Jeremiah as the following two verses make clear. While vss. 27 and 28 were not connected originally with this passage, the context is appropriate. The description is one of a mourning darkness which covers the ruined land. God declares his intent: "I have spoken. I have decided. I will not relent and I will not turn back from this" (עַל כִּי-דִבַּרְתִּי זַמֹּתִי וְלֹא נִחַמְתִּי וְלֹא-אָשׁוּב מִמֶּנָּה).[46] The use of the verb נחם is especially relevant in Jeremiah's understanding of his vocation. As I pointed out in the discussion on prophetic intercession, this is exactly what it was assumed that the intervention of prophet could accomplish. He could intercede for peace with the goal that God would relent (cf. Exod. xxxii; Amos vii). But this time there was no turning back and the prophet had to bear the vision and its proclamation with little sign of hope. Again his experience of vocation stood in contrast with those who preceded him and with the expectations of his contemporaries.

Jeremiah v 1-9

Just as the scope of the prophet's vision included God's activity of judgment, it also included a keen awareness of the extent of the transgression, obduracy, and apostasy of his people. This passage, the theme of which is "Why should I forgive you?" (cf. vss. 7, 1), includes an attempt by the prophet to examine Yahweh's case against the people for himself and to suggest a partial explanation.

The passage opens with Yahweh's invitation[47] to the people of Jerusalem (the imperatives used are plural) to search in their midst for "one person who acts justly and seeks faithfulness." If one can be found, God will forgive the city. There is a reminder here of God's conversation with Abraham in Gen. xviii 23-32, when the patriarch (or prophet, cf. Gen. xx 7) interceded on behalf of Sodom. For Jerusalem the terms are not ten faithful, but only one, although God knows that their faith is uniformly superficial (vs. 2).

Vss. 3-6 are the prophet's comment within the dialogue. He affirms that God indeed looks for faithfulness. The word used both in vs. 1 and here is אֱמוּנָה which connotes steadiness and reliability, presumably to the covenant. It is a word used to describe God (cf. Deut. xxxii 4) and the Law (Ps. cxix 86) as well as people. The only firm resolve that was a part of this people was their determination to rebel. "They refused to take correction" (מֵאֲנוּ קַחַת מוּסָר) and "they refused to repent" (מֵאֲנוּ לָשׁוּב), but rather they

"set their faces like rock" (חָזְקוּ פְנֵיהֶם מִסֶּלַע). Even though God had struck them (in 609 B.C.?), they "felt no pain" (וְלֹא-חָלוּ).[48] In vss. 4-5, Jeremiah pursues every avenue to try to comprehend and to help the people move beyond this intransigence. It must be because he has only been in contact with the "poor" (דַּלִּים), he thinks. The reference seems to be to the general populace of Jerusalem rather than to a specific economic class, since they are contrasted with "those of high station" (הַגְּדֹלִים) in vs. 5. These citizens simply did not know "the way of the Lord, the legal claim (or "justice"-- מִשְׁפַּט) of their God," since they were probably too preoccupied with their petty affairs to be able to perceive the chastening hand of Yahweh. For them, it was enough that God was a cultural trapping to their daily lives. But the great sorrow for Jeremiah was to discover that the leaders were no different (vs. 5). They did not heed the covenant claims of Yahweh on their lives either. "They had all broken the yoke and torn off the traces" (cf. ii 20). The imagery is that of oxen who are yoked to a plough which is drawn with the aid of harness thongs. Rather than pulling cooperatively, this is a picture of wild rebellion. The assessment of the condition of his people plagued Jeremiah. There was no hope for them, since they had made their decision stubbornly. Like an ox who has run away from the protective nurture of his master, these people can only expect to be ambushed and torn to pieces by the wild beasts (vs. 6). Yahweh speaks his

judgment again in vss. 7-9, reiterating the conclusions which Jeremiah has drawn. Why should he forgive this people who have so thoroughly forsaken him?

If it is assumed that the role of the prophet is to speak God's word to the people, calling them back to covenant obedience, this vision of obduracy is a painful one indeed. That he was justified in speaking God's word of judgment was no consolation for the prophet.

Jeremiah v 12-14

This short, fragmentary section functions as an affirmation of Jeremiah's lonely, prophetic calling in the face of the rejection of his message by the people. The context consists of various short statements from the prophet which have been woven together with some effectiveness, but not without confusion. The LXX, for example, has the phrase λέγει Κύριος ("says the Lord"), which translates נְאֻם-יְהוָה from the MT, in the middle of vs. 11, rather than at the end. The effect is to connect vss. 11 and 12, utilizing "the house of Israel" as the subject of vs. 11 and "the house of Judah" as the subject of vs. 12 ("For the house of Israel have indeed dealt treacherously with me, says the Lord, and the house of Judah have lied to their Lord, . . ."). This order is not reflected in the other ancient versions and is not to be preferred. The problem is in designating a subject referent for vs. 12, which simply opens with כִּחֲשׁוּ בַּיהוָה ("they have

been untrue to the Lord").[49] From the previous verse, the subject indeed seems to be the people of Israel and Judah and this is the explanation given by the Targ. and followed by Rashi and Kimchi. An alternative possibility relies on the fact that vs. 12b ("Misfortune will not overtake us, nor will we see sword or famine") is precisely the kind of message which was being delivered by the prophets spoken of in vs. 13. It, therefore, has been interpreted by some that all of vs. 12 should be read as the statement of the false prophets (cf. xiv 13f.), and that vs. 13 should be read as Jeremiah's indignant rejoinder.[50] But, Rashi and Kimchi see vs. 13 as a continuation of the words of the people from vs. 12, although this seems somewhat strange, since they also say that the people are speaking of false prophets. But if, on the other hand, the interpretation is that this verse represents what is being said by evil people concerning the true prophets who have prophesied ill, then the verse makes sense. Further, it also makes sense of the final phrase of vs. 13 in the MT, which is omitted in the LXX. כֹּה יֵעָשֶׂה לָהֶם ("Thus it will be done to them") is awkward as it appears, and Bright, following Duhm and Rudolph, thinks that it may have "fallen out of vs. 14."[51] While this is a neat suggestion, there is no manuscript evidence for it. If the previous two verses are taken as the comment of the people, then this final line is uttered by Jeremiah, indicating that those very things which the people deny will, in fact, come upon them. Vs. 14 has been appended to this section as

God's affirmation of Jeremiah's ministry in face of his opposition and in contrast with those false prophets with whom he is being identified. The phrase יַעַן דַּבֶּרְכֶם אֶת-הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה ("Because you have declared this word . . .") has often been emended to read "because **they** have declared this word . . ." since it is seen as awkward in the context.[52] There is no manuscript evidence to support this emendation, however. Furthermore, it is unnecessary if the passage is read as I have suggested. Yahweh is speaking to the prophet in reference to the word Jeremiah has spoken at the end of vs. 13, which is a summational declaration of the message which he has continued to speak in spite of the opposition.

The words of Yahweh to the prophet are a direct affirmation of God's presence and power to accomplish the word which he has called the prophet to proclaim. The people may indeed think that Jeremiah is only full of "wind" like the other prophets which have brought them warnings, but God will demonstrate in time that the prophet possesses the very substantive and efficacious "word" of God.

Jeremiah vi 9-11

This passage, which will be dealt with at length in another chapter, expresses in dialogue form Jeremiah's vocational frustration with the obduracy of his people. God has commanded him to speak, giving warning of the judgment which is to come. But the people will not listen. Their ears are closed and the very word of the Lord is offensive

to them. Yet the prophet is full of the "wrath of the Lord" (חֲמַת יהוה), the oracles of doom. He wearies himself holding it in (cf. xx 9). Yahweh's response in vs. 11 is that the prophet should speak even though no one will listen.

These verses reflect a deep and unmitigated source of tension and suffering for the prophet within his vocation. He is endowed with God's word, but when he speaks it, he is ignored or persecuted. Worse yet is the fact that it brings him pain to perceive and to proclaim the judgment in the first place. The vision of judgment is overwhelming to him as we have seen (iv 19-26). He speaks only because he longs for his people to repent. But he is ignored and his words are placed in the category of "wind" (v 13) and rejected. The double pain of agonizing vision and public repudiation cannot be assuaged by withdrawing in silence, for the word which is within him presses for release. This dialogue is proclaimed not to win sympathy but to express the reality of the prophetic vocation as Jeremiah was coming to experience it, in contrast to the prophetic orthodoxy of his day which is illustrated in vss. 13, 14.

Jeremiah vi 27-30

In this epilog to chapter vi, similar in tone to v 14, God once again reiterates the prophet's task in light of the stubborn rebelliousness of the people (cf. ix 6). Similar to the command in vi 11 that the prophet should continue to

prophesy, here the command is that he should continue to observe and test, much as an assayer tests unrefined ore. The "fire" used in the refinement of the people is the wrath of Yahweh expressed in the judgment oracles. Jeremiah is called to speak because the word has the potentiality of purging the wicked.

The text is a difficult one, and we cannot take the time to examine it in depth here. However, vs. 27 requires some explanation if it is to support the meaning which I have given to it. The MT of the first line reads בָּחוֹן נְתַתִּיךָ בְעַמִּי מִבְצָר which literally seems to mean "I have made you a siege tower (cf. Isa. xxiii 13)--a fortress to my people." Indeed, this is how it is read by the Targ., Rashi (cf. Isa. xxxii 14) and Kimchi.[53] A connection may be seen between this verse and i 18. The use of [בחן] in the next line (cf. Jer. xii 3; ix 6; xi 20; xvii 10; xx 12; Zech. xiii 9; Job xxiii 10), however, strongly suggests that בָּחוֹן should be interpreted as "tester, assayer", although this is a <u>hapax legomenon</u>. The rest of the section certainly supports this meaning. But then the problem is how to understand מִבְצָר , which, taken as "fortress," is incongruent with the context here. Older commentators have connected it with [בָּצָר], meaning "precious ore" (cf. Job xxii 24). The phrase would then read something like: "I have made you an assayer--my people from ore" (cf. NIV). Others have revocalized the word as a Piel participle מְבַצֵּר , suggesting the meaning "one who searches through/a

tester."[54] This is rather conjectural, since the Piel of [בצר] in BH occurs only in Isa. xxii 10 and Jer. li 53, in both cases meaning "fortify" rather than "separate". G. R. Driver redivides the consonantal text and reads מְבֻצְרוֹ תֵּדָע ("its testing you know"), although this creates some problem with the agreement of the suffixes between the two lines, and, in addition, has no support from the versions.[55] Bright suggests that it might be taken in connection with נְחֹשֶׁת הִבָּרְזֶל from verse 28, which also seems to be out of place in the MT, to form an additional colon glossing the first colon: "I have made you my people's assayer / a tester of bronze and iron." But, he adds that all three words may have been drawn in secondarily from i 18.[56] Following the thought of the Vulg., which reads "I have made you a strong tester among my people" (Probatorem dedi te in populo meo robustum), I would suggest a revocalization of מְבֻצָּר with the meaning "fortified," and take it as a reference to i 18. Jeremiah is given the task of testing the people, even as God continues to test him. It is a difficult task, both because of their hardness and because, once assayed, the only verdict which can be announced is "rejected" (vs. 30). Therefore, it is important that the prophet be reminded that he has been fortified for his office from the beginning.

Jeremiah viii 18-23 [ix 1]

We now turn to a very interesting passage. The context of Jer. viii 18-23 is a series of short poems emphasizing

the continual, persistent apostasy of the people (viii 4-7), the foolish and ineffective attempts by the leaders to bring healing (viii 8-12), and the tragic judgment which is about to overtake them even as they cry out in despair (viii 13-17). In its present position within the canon, Jer. viii 18-23 is the prophet's heartbroken lament over the destruction of his people. The passage may actually be seen as continuing through ix 8, which includes an expression of Jeremiah's desire to escape (ix 1).

The difficulty of Jer. viii 18-23 is enhanced by the juxtaposition of phrases which must be attributed to different speakers. As it stands in the text, the structure of the first part of the passage could be outlined as follows:

I. Prophet's introductory lament (verse 18)
II. Reason for lament: proleptic vision of exile (verse 19, 20).
    A. Context of vision established (19a)
    B. Cry of the people (19b) reflecting theological consideration.
    C. Response of Yahweh (19c) reflecting covenant lawsuit.
    D. Renewed cry of people (20) reflecting dismay and misunderstanding. שלום has not come (cf. viii 11, 15).
III. Prophet's lament continues (verse 21).

Note that I am assuming here that the vision of the exile is proleptic. The prophet is responding to what will be, rather than to something that has already taken place. Such a phenomenon would not be unique to this passage. In iv 23-26 the prophet "witnesses" a cosmic destruction, which is recorded as a first-person account, though the events have not yet transpired in history. Furthermore, the prophet

proclaims that he has "heard portents of the future" (cf. iv 19-21) and others are invited to listen as well (cf. vi 17f.). Bright agrees that this passage does not presuppose the exile, but his solution is to read מֵאֶרֶץ מֶרְחָקִים (verse 19) with Isaiah xxxiii 17 as "far and wide through the land" or to emend the text to מֶרְחָבִים.[57] There is no support from the versions for either emendation or an alternative translation which does not suggest the exile.

What is clear, regardless of the time-frame in which one sees this passage, is that Jeremiah's suffering is a result of his grief over the plight of his people. His people are "broken"; there is no salvation (verse 20) or healing (verse 15) for them. And Jeremiah participates in their agony.

Let us now take a detailed look at verses 18 and 21 before commenting further on the passage as a whole.

Verse 18 opens with the difficult textual corruption מַבְלִיגִיתִי. A number of solutions are proposed as early as the ancient versions, but they offer no consensus. A review of the options, however, may be helpful.

As the word stands in the MT, it appears to be some form based on a root בלג. Indeed, BDB enumerates five occurrences of the root (including Jer. viii 18), all with the sense of looking cheerful, smiling, or causing to brighten up.[58] One of the more interesting of these is Ps. xxxix 14 which is in the context of a personal lament addressed to Yahweh and reads: "Turn your gaze from me and I

will smile (or become cheerful-- וְאַבְלִיגָה) before I depart and am no more." Here the psalmist concludes his plea to God with a request that, if God remains silent and will not deliver him, he should at least leave him alone so that the psalmist can finally die in abandonment, which he perceives as more cheerful than theological quandry. The verse is parallel in thought to Job x 20, 21, which employs the same verbal form (וְאַבְלִיגָה מְעַט --"and I will smile a little"). The lamentation style of both of these passages, as well as the language employed, is strikingly similar to several of the laments found on the lips of Jeremiah.[59] Echoes can also be found in Jeremiah of Job ix 27, 28, where Job states: "Though I say, 'I will forget my complaint (שְׂיחִי); I will abandon my sad face and I will cheer up (וְאַבְלִיגָה),' I am afraid of all my pains (עַצְּבֹתָי) . . ." While these contextual similarities may have influenced the interpretations of this text, they do not, however, present a ready solution to the problems here. First, the form of the word in Jer. viii 18, if derived from the root בלג , remains anomalous. BDB takes it as a feminine noun, perhaps a "denominative formed from a participle Hiph'îl."[60] Rashi also indicates that it is to be read as a noun as does Aquila who renders it with τέρψις μου . But Kimchi (along with Rabbi Jonah and Rabbi Mosheh whom he quotes) reads the word as a verb in the first person. Their explanations of the form, however, are far too fanciful to be considered seriously. Second, even assuming that the form could be

understood, the meaning is still unclear if we read with the root בלג . Aquila seems to see in the verse an ambiguity within the prophet which distresses his heart: τέρψις μου ετ εμε οδυνη επ εμε καρδια μου ταλαιπωρος ("My gladness for me [is] pain for me; my heart is suffering"). But there is no indication as to what brings the prophet "cheering," an emotion which seems quite out of context. Rashi interprets the word as the prophetic attempt to have a more positive outlook and to pull himself together. But when he tries, his heart again sickens at the revelations which he receives of coming retributions. Though he does not draw the parallel, Rashi may have Jer. x 19b in view which reads: "But I said, 'Truly this is a sickness (חֳלִי) and I must bear it (וְאֶסָּאֶנּוּ).'" Again, however, the context does not support a statement of the prophet's struggle for personal, emotional composure. This is a passage of unrelenting devastation. Kimchi (assuming a verbal form) reads the statement as "I show courage concerning torment" (התחזקי על יגון). But he realizes that this does not readily match the second phrase, so an additional gloss is necessary: ". . . that is to say that I would like to show courage concerning my torment but I am not able because my heart is sick" (ילומר שארצה להתחזק על יגוני לא אוכל כי עלי לבי דו). The purpose for an attempt by Jeremiah to show courage or contain his anguish, as Kimchi sees it, is to provide a strong example for the terrorized people. This solution is seen in none of the ancient versions, either

because they were working with a different text or because it was recognized much earlier than Kimchi that this solution to the textual difficulty created problems both in the construction and meaning of the verse.

The Pesh. apparently is reading a shorter Hebrew Vorlage or has adopted a shorter emendation, as indicated in the rendering ܚܠܫ from the root ܚܠܐ.[61] In Gen. xviii 12 the same Syriac form translates the Hebrew בְּלֹתִי ("I have become old/worn out"). The Pesh. seems, therefore, to be reading Jer. viii 18a as בלותי/בלחי עלי יגון ("I wear away/grow old in my grief/distress"). While this solution is more congruent with the context, it is deficient as a convincing explanation of the consonantal text as witnessed through MT and elsewhere.

The Vulg. also seems to depart from the consonantal text in favor of a rendering that encompasses the "sense" of the verse. The first colon reads: Dolor meus super dolorem ("My sorrow/pain is beyond sorrow/pain"). We may presume that super dolorem renders the prepositional phrase יגון על and that meus represents a pronominal suffix on the first word. Dolor, however, is such a commonly used word that it gives us little help in reconstructing a possible text. In Jeremiah alone it is used to render חיל three times, חבל three times, יגון four times, and מכאב three times. Could the Vulg. be reading חבלי or יגוני as the first word of the verse? It is impossible to say, but it seems more likely that the Latin has been more strongly influenced by the

apparent meaning.

Targum Jonathan proposes yet another solution. In a grossly paraphrastic manner the verse is interpreted as "concerning those who ridicule (מְלַעֲגִין in Sperber or מְלָעְגִין in מקראות גדולות reflecting the First and Second Rabbinic Bibles and the Antwerp Polyglot Bible) while listening to the prophets who are prophesying to them--weariness and groaning will come to them because of their sins. Because of them the prophet says, 'My heart mourns.'" מלעגין or מלעיגין may reflect an understood form from Hebrew לעג such as a Hiphil participle מַלְעִגִים (or perhaps מַלְעִיגִים).[62] The Targ. understands the phrase to read: "Those who mock/ridicule me will sorrow; my heart mourns (because of them)." Unfortunately this is not a passage dealing with the ridicule of people (like xv 15 or xx 10), which is perhaps the motivation for the Targ. to go to some lengths to explain the verse. Symmachus also reflects the Targ. by rendering the verse as χλευαζεις με οδονη επ εμε η καρδια μου λυπηρα ("You mock me. It is a pain for me; my heart is painful"). These suggestions are even less helpful in the search for a contextually and grammatically satisfying solution, since they create more problems than they solve.

Somewhat more promising is the LXX suggestion, at least as concerns the consonantal text. LXX sees the whole verse as a continuation of verse 17. נְאֻם-יְהוָה of verse 17 in the MT does not appear in the LXX, which then continues the

image of "the deadly serpents" by indicating that "they shall bite you fatally (ἀνίατα) with the pain of your distressed heart." It should be apparent that this rendering in its entirety still does not make good sense out of the verse, especially the last phrases. But the utilization of ἀνίατα is intriguing. In Isaiah xiv 6, ἀνίατα (in the dative) renders בְּלִתִּי סָרָה ("without ceasing") and in Prov. vi 15 it renders אֵין מַרְפֵּא ("there will be no healing"). By combining these two patterns, it seems likely that LXX is reading בלתי גהה (cf. Prov. xvii 22 for גֵּהָה) or בלתי גהות ("without healing"). Bright follows the LXX even to the extent of connecting בלתי גהה to the end of verse 17 (though he also retains the נְאֻם-יהוה).[63] However, he then makes much better sense out of the remaining portion of verse 18 by retaining it (against LXX) as a part of a lament. The first colon, thus, reads: עָלַי יָגוֹן עָלַי ("Grief has overcome me").

Holladay moves in a similar direction in the textual reconstruction, though he posits the use of מִבְּלִי rather than בְּלִתִּי for "without."[64] This has precedent within Jeremiah itself which utilizes מִבְּלִי four other times (ii 15; ix 9, 10, 11) but never בְּלִתִּי (preferring לְבִלְתִּי which occurs 22 times). Holladay then goes further to preserve the integrity of verse 18 as it appears in the MT. This has the advantage over Bright of eliminating the awkward attempt to combine the direction of both the MT and LXX and, hence, preserve neither. Holladay reads the first colon of verse

18 as מִבְּלִי גֵהָה/גֵהוּת עָלַי יָגוֹן ("Without healing upon me is sorrow; . . .").

Before suggesting my own solution, I should make make mention of one other note from early materials. Theodotion renders the verse: διὰ τὸ μὴ εἶναι ὕβριν επ εμε (οδονη επ εμε) η καρδια μου οδυνηρα ("When there was no gross insult/assault against me, my heart was painful"). The implication seems to be that the prophet's pain was perpetual. If it was not a result of his persecution, then it was a result of the agony of his vision. A retroversion of the phrase into BH, which takes into account the consonantal text of the Masoretes, is difficult, but one possibility would be מִבְּלִי גֵּאוּת (cf. Ps. xvii 10). The suggestion is intriguing but does not prove helpful in the final analysis.

It seems to me that if our criterion is to find a solution which is at once close to the textus receptus and satisfactory in the context, that the whole line should be preserved. This is far less awkward than Bright's reconstruction. The first word quite easily breaks according to Holladay's suggestion into מִבְּלִי גֵּהָה ("Without healing") which is consonant with Jeremiah's expressions of incurable suffering elsewhere as in xv 18 or x 19. The substituting of the letters ח' for הה is quite easily accounted for through orthographic misreading of an unusual word. The repetition of עלי is awkward in the sentence, both grammatically and in terms of exact meaning.

The Masoretic pointing suggests that they were not meant to be read the same, though they have often been taken as alternative forms of עַל with the pronominal suffix.[65] BDB holds that the first עָלַי preserves the longer form of the preposition עֲלֵי which can be found in other material (cf. Gen. xlix 17, 22; Isa. xviii 4; Micah v 6; etc.)[66] Thus, along with my suggestion for the first part of the verse, the whole verse could read: "Without healing concerning the sorrow upon me, my heart is faint." This seems to be the simplest solution preserving the integrity of the MT.

However, another possibility is that a verb should be read in the early part of the verse in order to break up the awkward construction of three consecutive prepositional phrases. I would suggest reading מבלי גהה יעל יגון עלי, the verb being pointed יַעַל as a Qal, third person masculine singular imperfect of עלה.[67] This form is of course unusual and one might prefer the more common יַעֲלֶה. Even this slightly more elaborate form is not too difficult to justify on the basis of the consonantal text, the final "heh" having been corrupted through dittography and the influence of the subsequent עלי. The first "yôḏ" is easily borrowed from the first word as it appears in the MT and the absence of the final "yôḏ" is accounted for by eliminating the dittography with the "yôḏ" of יגון. If this in fact was the original (there is of course no way to be sure) the corruption would have been further simplified by a transposition of the "yôḏ" under the influence of the second

עלי . The verse could now be translated: "Without healing, grief will emerge upon me--my heart is sick" or "Without healing, grief will come upon me--my heart is sick." The latter translation of עלה is similar to that in Jer. li 50 where Babylon is exhorted to remember what Yahweh has done to Jerusalem: וְיִרוּשָׁלַ֖͏ִם תַּעֲלֶ֥ה עַל-לִבְּכֶֽם ("And Jerusalem will come to mind" or literally ". . . will come up on your heart"). In this case, the meaning of Jer. viii 18 is that, in the absence of healing (which could apply either to the prophet or to the people, cf. vs. 22), only sorrow will fill the prophet's consciousness, since his heart is sick concerning the disaster which will befall his people. The former translation is influenced by the appearance of עלה in viii 22, where it is used in the technical sense of new skin "emerging" over a wound. In the absence of healing, the only thing which can "emerge" from within is more distress. And if the "heart" is sick it is all the more likely that external healing cannot take place. This final suggestion also conveniently ties together the imagery of the passage by further connecting the suffering of the prophet with the suffering of his people (as clearly stated in verse 21).

Even if no final solution is possible for the opening colon of Jer. viii 18, it remains clear from the balance of the vocabulary, that it is the intention of the verse to describe further the prophet's agony. Let us turn now to the two key words in this description.

The first is יָגוֹן which appears only 14 times in the OT, four of which are in Jeremiah. In Jer. xx 18, Jeremiah asks why he was born if it was only "to see disaster and sorrow" (לִרְאוֹת עָמָל וְיָגוֹן). The verse ends with the phrase "My days will end in shame," which indicates that עָמָל וְיָגוֹן must refer to his own life--to what he will experience personally--rather than to what he witnesses in others. In Jer. xxxi 13, יָגוֹן is parallel with אבל ("mourning") and is to be replaced by נֶחָמָה ("comfort") and שִׂמְחָה ("joy") its opposites: וְנִחַמְתִּים וְשִׂמַּחְתִּים מִיגוֹנָם ("And I will comfort them and give them joy for their sorrow"). The picture is clear here as elsewhere that יגון is a word connected with mourning and grief.[68] It is not so much physical as it is an emotional agony, but it is often seen as the result of oppression, persecution, or distressing pain.[69] Such is the case in Jer. xlv 3 where Jeremiah recalls the lament of Baruch who has said that "the Lord has added sorrow to my pain" (כִּי-יָסַף יְהוָה יָגוֹן עַל-מַכְאֹבִי).[70] Frequently, as also seen in Jer. xlv 3, יגון is associated with אֲנָחָה ("groaning", cf. Isa. xxxv 10; Ps. xxxi 11). In the ancient versions, יָגוֹן is uniformly translated as a form of dolor in the Vulg. and as a form of דְּוּנָא in the Targ. As we have previously indicated, dolor has a wide spectrum of meaning so it is uncertain how the word was specifically understood by Jerome. דְּוּנָא (a variation of דְּאֵבוּנָא) is related to BH דְּאֵב (cf. Jer. xxxi 12, 25) and has the sense of weariness or languor which

does not carry the sense of mourning (though the Targ. also includes the word תְּנַחֲתָא --"groaning"--which is somewhat closer). But it must be remembered in the case of the Targ. that this part of the verse is being applied to the condition of those who will not listen to the prophet rather than to the prophet himself. The LXX translates יגון in viii 18 as ὀδύνη ("distressed pain"), and elsewhere in Jeremiah translates it with πόνος ("grief, distress, pain"--xx 18) and κόπος ("trouble, suffering, pain"--xlv 3). Again, none of these words specifically denotes a state of mourning, though, again, in the case of viii 18 the context is the mortal wound of a snakebite (verse 17) rather than the misery of the prophet. The Pesh., however, does preserve the idea of grief by utilizing a form of حمل which often is used of sadness and grief as well as other distress. Despite the interpretive uncertainty of the ancient versions, brought about by the textual problems of the whole verse rather than this specific word, יגון does seem to carry the sense of grieving or mourning here. This is highly appropriate, whether the phrase "without healing" (which opens my reconstruction of the verse) applies to the prophet or to the people. If the prophet's own condition is in view, יגון is an appropriate accompaniment to pain (as in xlv 3). When healing does not take place, only grief can follow the pain. If the distress of the people is in view, then, as no new skin will "emerge" to cover their wound (verse 22), only grief and mourning will "emerge" for the

prophet. His response to their condition goes beyond simple distress to true empathy.

The final word of the verse, דַּוָּי, appears only three times in the Old Testament and is always related to the heart. In Isa. i 5 the people are described as having been beaten from head to foot (verse 6). Bruises, welts, and open wounds cover the whole body. The line used to summarize this thoroughly devastated condition is: כָּל-רֹאשׁ לָחֳלִי וְכָל-לֵבָב דַּוָּי ("The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is ill/faint"). In Lam. i 22, the personified Jerusalem describes the results of her judgment by God: כִּי-רַבּוֹת אַנְחֹתַי וְלִבִּי דַוָּי ("for many are my groans, and my heart is faint"). Note here the use of אנחה which is frequently associated with דַּוָּי in contexts of mourning. I should also point out that in both of these cases, the "faint heart" is a result of the devastated condition of judgment. It is possible that this insight might lend weight to the interpretation of "without healing" as a reference to the people's desolate condition. Jeremiah has not been judged, but they, and in the proleptic vision they are in distress in a far off land. "Without healing" for them, the prophet's "heart is faint" at the vision of the results of judgment. The ancient versions again demonstrate an interpretive breadth in their dealing with דַּוָּי. The Vulg. renders it with <u>moerens</u> ("grieving") which suggests that the meaning intended for <u>dolor</u> (rendering יָגוֹן) should probably be taken as "sorrow" rather than "pain."

Thus the sense of mourning becomes clear in the Latin. The Targ. and Pesh. follow the MT by utilizing the cognates דָּוַי and ʃo; . In Lam. i 22, however, the Targ. renders דַּוָי with חַלָּשׁ ("weak"; cf. BH חלשׁ) which provides us with an additional insight into the meaning of the word. The LXX renders it with forms of λύπη (or λύπεω) in Isa. i 5 and Lam. i 22 which is a very general word for "pain, distress, grief" roughly equivalent to Latin dolor. However, in Jer. viii 18, דוי is rendered by ἀπορουμένης ("distressed, perplexed"). This Greek word is employed only eight times in the OT for a variety of Hebrew words including עלף ("faint"; metaphorically in Isa. li 20), שְׁכוּל ("bereaved" --Hos. xiii 8), and חָסֵר ("lacking"--Prov. xxxi 11).[71]

From our analysis of Jer. viii 18, we may conclude that the verse indeed expresses the agony of the prophet, though here it is seen more as a grief rather than a pain, and it is associated with the vision of his people's impending devastation and captivity rather than his own persecution at their hands. Kimchi makes the comment that the prophet's "heart is sick" because of the distress that Israel will not listen to him. Indeed, this may be true, but the comment seems to be influenced more by the Targum (though it is not mentioned in Kimchi's comment), which distinctly makes this interpretation, rather than by the MT text itself.

Moving along in Jeremiah's lament (viii 18-23), we now jump over verses 19 and 20, which describe the situation and the dialogue between God and his people within the vision

which has given rise to the prophet's agony. In verse 21, the prophet again speaks of his own suffering and several words which he employs are interesting for our present study.

The verse begins with an explicit statement of the cause in this instance of Jeremiah's suffering: עַל-שֶׁבֶר בַּת-עַמִּי הָשְׁבָּרְתִּי ("Over the brokenness/destruction of the daughter of my people, I am broken"). What is immediately evident is the prophet's intense sense of identification wtih his people. His life has been affected in similar fashion to theirs, though the cause has been different. They are "broken" as a result of their sin and the resultant judgment of God, while he is "broken" by the trauma of their destruction. The inclusion of the possessive pronoun in identifying the people ("my people") is formulaic, occurring nine times in a variety of contexts in these early chapters of Jeremiah alone. Yet its appearance four times in this passage furthers the impression of identity between Jeremiah and the people (as well as the identification which Jeremiah has with Yahweh's interests, since "my people" is a common epithet employed in the divine oracles as well).

The root שׁבר is a favorite for Jeremiah, occurring some 15 times in nominal forms and 28 times in verbal forms. A survey of these appearances reveals an interesting variety of usage. Frequently it is used as a noun to designate the destruction of the land (cf. iv 6, 20; vi 1; xlviii 3, 5; l 22; etc.). As might be expected these are connected with

military operations. For example, in Jer. iv 6, Yahweh proclaims that he is "bringing evil from the north and great destruction (שֶׁבֶר גָּדוֹל)." In iv 19-22, the prophet is in agony as he visualizes the coming events of devastation. The context is very simliar to that in viii 18-23. In verse 20, he exclaims: שֶׁבֶר עַל-שֶׁבֶר נִקְרָא כִּי שֻׁדְּדָה כָּל-הָאָרֶץ ("Ruin upon ruin/disaster upon disaster is reported; for the whole land is devastated"). In each of these cases, the object of the שֶׁבֶר is the "land" or the "nation"--in other words, a more impersonal collective term. Where the collective terminology for the people is more personal, the meaning of שֶׁבֶר moves into the more medically oriented sphere where it describes personal injury, wounds, fractures, etc., or that which breaks the flesh or the bones (cf. vi 14; viii 11; x 19; xiv 17; xxx 12, 15). Jer. xiv 17c provides a good example: כִּי שֶׁבֶר גָּדוֹל נִשְׁבְּרָה בְּתוּלַת בַּת-עַמִּי מַכָּה נַחְלָה מְאֹד: ("For the virgin daughter of my people has been wounded by a great, mighty blow, a sorely infected wound"). The terminology שֶׁבֶר גָּדוֹל is the same as that in Jer. iv 6, but here it is parallel with מַכָּה נַחְלָה מְאֹד and connotes personal injury and wounding. As in viii 21 the people of Jerusalem are designated as the בַּת-עַמִּי , though in this case the utilization of the additional word "virgin" makes the passage all the more personal by evoking the tender image of a father grieving for his once protected, young daughter. In other similar passages, שֶׁבֶר is again found in parallel with מַכָּה (x 19; xxx 12; Nah.

iii 19; Isa. xxx 26), as well as מַכְאֹב (xxx 15) and פְּאֵב (Isa. lxv 14), which we have already noted deal with personal pain and injury. Jer. xxx 15 asks: "Why do you cry out concerning your wound? Your pain is incurable" (מַה-תִּזְעַק עַל-שִׁבְרֵךְ אָנוּשׁ מַכְאֹבֵךְ), indicating in another manner the presence of pain and injury which causes anguish. As with many of the other words of suffering, שׁבר is also frequently connected with רפא (cf. Lam. ii 13; Pss. lx 4; xix 11; li 8-9; Isa. xxx 26). Jer. viii 11 (= vi 14) describes the false prophets who "heal the wound of the daughter of my people superficially" (וַיִּרְפּוּ אֶת-שֶׁבֶר בַּת-עַמִּי עַל-נְקֵלָה).

From this review, it should be evident that שׁבר as utilized by Jeremiah is descriptive of a wound, injury or destruction inflicted by an external force (either a blow or a military campaign). Its effect is a breaking of the wholeness (שָׁלוֹם) of a person and pain (or in the case of a military campaign, a devastation of the land) which requires significant healing.[72] Thus, we see in Jer. viii 21, that the prophet has been rendered broken, injured, crushed by the vision that his people are broken. Any sense of wholeness is gone.

It is not likely that Jeremiah is speaking here of bodily injury on himself, even though the brokenness of his people as he envisioned it probably entailed physical destruction. But as we have seen in other places (cf. iv 19), Jeremiah perceived any disruption of wholeness as

injury which affected the whole person. Little distinction is made between the emotional or mental and the corporeal. An injury in any one of these areas was an injury affecting the entire being.

The second colon of the verse actually makes the more emotional implications of Jeremiah's "wound" apparent as his response to the שֶׁבֶר is not to cry out in physical pain but to mourn or grow sullen. The root which Jeremiah chooses to describe his reaction is an interesting one. In general, קדר (which appears only 16 times in the OT) seems to indicate a condition in which either natural illumination (as light from the sun or moon) or the "brightness" of a person's countenance is obscured. The connection between these two images has precedence in a great variety of OT texts which describe people's visages and conditions in terms of the light which they radiate. Moses' face is described as having "shone" because of his speaking with God (Exod. xxxiv 29, 30, 35). This was presumably intended as a description of the reflected glory of God himself, whose face was often described as "shining" as a sign of favor and relationship.[73] But even ordinary people who were happy and well-groomed were described as having shining faces. Job's smile is described as the "light of my face" (Job xxix 24). Psalm civ 15 praises God for his care which, among other things, supplies "wine which makes glad the heart of a man so that he makes his face shine with oil." While oil can create the desired effect cosmetically, wisdom can also

alter a face and cause it to shine (Eccl. viii 1). In addition to the use of "light" imagery to describe a person's appearance, it is also used to describe a condition of joy (Ps. xcvii 11), comfort (Esther viii 16), healing (Isa. lviii 8), deliverance (Mic. vii 8), righteousness and salvation (Isa. lxii 1), etc. In other words, where there is wholeness, there is light. Thus, whatever marred or destroyed that wholeness, also cast a shadow of gloom. The light was obscured. Micah iii 6 describes the cessation of prophetic vision by saying that "the day will become dark (קדר) over them (i.e. the prophets)." Jer. iv 28 connects the ideas of mourning and obscuring the light in the aftermath of cosmological destruction: עַל-זֹאת תֶּאֱבַל הָאָרֶץ וְקָדְרוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם מִמָּעַל ("For this the earth shall mourn and the heavens above darken"). In Jer. xiv 2, קדר is used again in parallel with אבל , but less specifically related to "light." Here the idea of mourning is seen apart from its etymology in the light imagery: אָבְלָה יְהוּדָה וּשְׁעָרֶיהָ אֻמְלְלוּ קָדְרוּ לָאָרֶץ וְצִוְחַת יְרוּשָׁלַם עָלָתָה ("Judah mourns. Her gates waste away; they mourn upon the ground, and the cry of Jerusalem ascends"). The idea of being in a broken down position is a part of the imagery. This is also reflected in the four occurrences of קדר in the Psalms, where sorrow and oppression are experienced as heavy burdens (Ps. xxxviii 7; xxxv 14; xlii 10; xliii 2; also Job xxx 28; v 11). It is quite possible that קדר was also found to be an appropriate word for mourning, in light of the apparently

common practice of "squalid neglect" while in mourning (cf. II Sam. xix 25).[74] A person was then quite naturally described as "growing dark." The Targ. suggests that people were in the habit of covering their faces with a "coating of blackness/ashes" (אֲכַרוּם אוּכְמִין) while in mourning. However, the Targ. does not indicate that this was then thought to dim a person's "light," but rather that he should look like a "pot" (כְּקוּדְרָא). The relation that the Targ. seems to find between the Hebrew קדר and the Aramaic קוּדְרָא , which employ the same consonants, suggests what seems to be a false etymology. Nevertheless, Kimchi refers to and glosses the Targ., indicating that the word deals with the practice of coloring one's face. Rashi says that קדרתי "means blackness (שַׁחֲרוּת) and darkness/misfortune (אוֹפֶל)." It is doubtful that Jeremiah is suggesting that he is participating in a rather formalized mourning ritual whether it is thought to consist of "squalid neglect" or blackening one's face. The use of קדר within BH itself does not specifically make these connections. Rather the sense is more one of dismay, of being excessively burdened, of having the "light" of one's countenance dimmed and the joy of wholeness replaced by the gloom of brokenness. Perhaps an apt translation capturing both the light and mourning imagery would be: "I gloom."

While the prophet may not be covered literally with blackening, it is no wonder that he chose קדר to describe his condition. His spirit is quenched; the light is gone;

he is broken. And in the final phrase of the verse he exclaims that שַׁמָּה הֶחֱזָקַתְנִי ("horror/desolation has seized me"). While this is the only juxtaposition of these two words in the MT, each is a favorite with Jeremiah. Of the 39 occurrences of שַׁמָּה in the OT, 24 are found in Jeremiah. With the exception of its occurrence here (which is the only place in which the prophet applies the word to himself) and in v 30 (where it is parallel with שַׁעֲרוּרָה and has the sense of "an astonishing, horrible thing"),[75] the instances of the word break quite intriguingly into two groups. The first group consists of occurrences in prose passages (with the exception of xviii 16 and li 37) where שַׁמָּה appears in a list with other words and phrases (like שְׁרֵקָה "hissing," חָרְבָּה "ruin/rubble," קְלָלָה "curse," חֶרְפָּה "reproach," אָלָה "curse," גַּל "heap of ruins") describing the disdain with which the people and their land will be regarded by those who witness their destruction. These seem to be related to the Deuteronomistic formulation in Deut. xxviii 37: "And you shall become a horror (שַׁמָּה), a proverb and a taunt among all the people where the Lord will drive you."

שַׁמָּה seems to mean "an object of horror," a thing so muti-lated that it is fit only to be taunted and cursed.[76] The second group is found in the poetic passages (except for l 3) where שַׁמָּה is used to describe the utter devastation of the land.[77] Frequently phrases like עָרֶיךָ תִּצֶּינָה מֵאֵין יוֹשֵׁב ("your cities will be destroyed, without inhabitants" --iv 7, cf. ii 15; xlvi 19; xlviii 9; li 29, 43) appear which

describe the extent of the devastation. In both of these groups, שְׁמָמָה relates to the results of God's judgment.

It is possible that Jeremiah had the desolation of the land in view when he declares that he has been "seized" by שְׁמָמָה . His vision, afterall, had consisted of hearing the cry of the people from captivity. The destruction of the land had already taken place. Not only were the people broken, a condition with which the prophet empathized deeply (verse 21a), but the land was a horrible desolation, ruined and uninhabited.

It is also possible that שְׁמָמָה here is not a substantive referring to the land at all, but rather a word describing an intense feeling of horror which overtakes the prophet as a result of his entire vision. In this case it would be akin to its appearance in Jer. v 30 which is mentioned above. It is helpful to note that, while שְׁמָמָה does not appear elsewhere with חזק (H), there are three instances where other words appear with it in constructions parallel to this one. In Jer. vi 24, Yahweh has declared that the enemy is about to come upon Jerusalem. The verse is written as a declaration of despair from the mouths of the people: "We have heard the report of it; our hands are limp. Anguish has seized us (צָרָה הֶחֱזִיקַתְנוּ), a pain like childbirth." In verse 26 the people are told to "put on sackcloth and roll in ashes; make for yourself a mourning as for an only son . . ." In Jer. xlix 24, Damascus is

similarly dscribed: ". . . and panic has seized her (וְרָטָט הֶחֱזִיקָה), anguish and travail like childbirth has taken hold of her." Finally, in Jer. l 43, it is the king of Babylon who hears a report and ". . . his hands hang limp. Anguish seizes him (צָרָה הֶחֱזִיקַתְהוּ); agony like childbirth." Let us note the similarities to Jer. viii 21b. First, the reaction occurs in response to a report in each instance. Second, the reaction is described as an intense, agonizing emotion which "seizes" (חזק H.) the individual or group. Third, in all but viii 21, the intensity and suddenness of the experience is further described with the image of childbirth. It is painful, agonizing, and commanding complete attention and energy. Fourth, in one passage in addition to viii 21 (namely vi 24), the experience is also accompanied by mourning. I would propose that Jer. viii 21 should be read in light of these other three passages, and that we should, therefore, interpret Jeremiah's lament as a sudden, horrified, emotional response which envelops him and throws him into mourning as a result of his proleptic vision.

Support for this interpretive connection is readily found in the LXX. While Jer. viii 21b is rendered somewhat weakly as . . . ἐσκοτώθην. ἀπορία κατίσχυσέ με ("I have been saddened/darkened. Difficulty prevails against me"), the LXX has nevertheless preceived an association with vi 24 and the others (cf. also xxii 23) by expanding the text with ὠδῖνες ὡς τικτούσης ("pains as in

childbirth"; Hebrew חיל כיולידה). As both Ziegler and Janzen indicate, it is likely that this final phrase is an expansion of the text rather than a reflection of the orginal Vorlage.[78] But that evaluation merely strengthens the assumption that the ties were very strong between this and the other verses mentioned--so strong that the text underwent an expansion. We should remember finally that this is not the only passage in which there may be reflections of this childbirth imagery applied to the prophet himself. Jer. iv 19a also employs vocabulary which can be connected with the image. (See comments on iv 19 above.)

Thus the MT of Jer. viii 21 can readily be interpreted as the words of the prophet, commenting on his intense reaction to the vision of his exiled people. His suffering or the destruction of his wholeness is akin to that of the people. His countenance is "dimmed" in mourning and the darkness and horror of the desolation has seized him with persistence and irresistable strength.

We now turn to a more complete evaluation of the treatment of this verse within the ancient versions. Most closely tied to the MT is the Vulg. which renders the verse with near word for word accuracy. The only slight expansion is the joining of the two first person singular verbs (שׁבר and קדר in the MT) with the conjunction "and." Thus the "affliction" (Latin contritus) and "sorrow" (contristo) which the prophet feels are seen as a single response to the

"affliction" of the people and the Latin word-play is made more evident. The poetic line of the Hebrew cola are not preserved by this addition, however, and it is not an expansion with support from the other versions. The Vulg. rendering of שְׁמָּה with stupor ("astonishment") suggests that it was being interpreted as an emotional reaction rather than a reference to the destruction. Where שְׁמָּה is used specifically of the desolation of the land, the Vulg. generally renders it as solitudo (cf. iv 7) or desolatio (cf. xviii 16). The Pesh. also supports this interpretation of שְׁמָּה by translating it as ("insensibility, amazement").[79] The only irregularity of the Pesh. is that it reflects a shorter text, omitting וְהִשְׁבַּרְתִּי in the MT. Thus the verse reads: "On account of the ruin of the daughter of my people, I mourned ( ) and amazement seized me." This same shortened text is evidenced in the LXX which reads: "For the destruction of the daughter of my people, I have been saddened." It may represent a genuine variation in the Vorlage, although the MT, which is supported by both the Vulg. and Targ. and which maintains a more consistent poetic line, is to be considered the superior text. We have already discussed the final expansion which is present in the LXX and which could be seen as a poetic compensation of the earlier omission. Did the translator, in fact, have a shortened Vorlage which he recognized as inadequate poetically and, therefore, did he try to reconstruct it by borrowing from passages with

constructural similarities? The LXX also supplies us with an interesting interpretation of קָדַרְתִּי by rendering it as εσκοτώθην ("I am darkened, blinded, dizzy"). LSJ suggests that σκοτοω can also mean "to be stupified,"[80] but, though it is also used to render קדר in Jer. xiv 2, it does not relate elsewhere to mourning.[81] Rather than connecting קדר with mourning, the LXX seems to view the word as indicating a kind of confusion or a sense of being overwhelmed. Perhaps it is meant to add to the image of childbearing by suggesting that the prophet is "dizzied" by what he has seen. שָׁמָּה also receives an unusual treatment in the LXX. Rather than being translated by the more common terms for the word in the LXX of Jeremiah like ἄβατός ("desolation" cf. xxvi 18 [LXX xxxii 18]), ἀφανισμός ("desolation" cf. xviii 16; xix 8; xxv 9, 11), or ἔρημος ("desert, wilderness" cf. iv 7; ii 15), it is translated by ἀπορία which appears only 8 times in the entire LXX and each time renders something different. The word generally means "difficulty" and suggests a difficulty in dealing with something. This is certainly less expressive of intense emotion than שָׁמָּה would seem to warrant, though the additional clause in the LXX restores some of the intensity. It is possible that the utilization of ἀπορία here was influenced by the use of the related ἀπορουμένης in verse 18, although, to be sure, verse 18 is interpreted as the end of the previous pericope in LXX rather than in this immediate context. Targ. Jonathan moves in a different

direction than the other versions by specifically designating this verse as a statement made by personified Jerusalem rather than by the prophet.[82] Besides the careful explanation of the meaning (and possible etymology) of קדר in the Targum which I have already mentioned, the only other variation of note is the rendering of הָשְׁבַּרְתִּי by Aramaic אִזְדַּעְזַעִית ("I tremble/shake"), despite the occurrence of the more common rendering of שׁבר by Aramaic תְּבָר at the beginning of the verse. Rather than seeing the double appearance of the root as an intentional expression of identification between the prophet and people, the Targ. views the second occurrence of root שׁבר as an altogether different expression of lament.

We may now summarize our study of the language of suffering as evidenced in Jer. viii 18-23. The source of the prophet's agony here is the dramatic realization of what lies in store for his people. There is little question of actual, physical pain, but rather it is a deep, pervasive, agonizing grief which grips Jeremiah. As a consequence he has no grounds or inclination to question or accuse Yahweh concerning this suffering. He fully understands that his people are walking to their end despite continual warnings. It is not God's fault, and yet the prophet cannot help but mourn from his perspective as a representative of the same people who will be judged, as the messenger who is repeatedly frustrated in his attempts to dissuade the people from their course, and as the confidant of God who has come

to share some of God's own love and grief for the people. The suffering is intense and it is expressed in a vocabulary which is fluid in its meaning but relates specifically to an unwholeness or brokenness (opposite of שָׁלוֹם) which requires healing. Intense grief causes suffering which is every bit as pervasive and devastating as other kinds of suffering. Jeremiah's reflex is either to continue to "weep day and night (וְאֶבְכֶּה יוֹמָם וָלַיְלָה) for the slain of the daughter of my people" (verse 23) or to try to escape from the situation altogether (Jer. ix 1).

The opening colon of vs. 23 as an expression of the prophet's mourning must be read along with xiii 17 and xiv 17.[83] These are the passages which have given rise to the epithet "The Weeping Prophet." But Jeremiah's tears are not to be understood as a sign of melancholia, but rather as the appropriate reaction connected with intense grief. In all three passages, the bitter weeping accompanies visions of affliction (sword and famine) and captivity. This expression of mourning is bound with the prophetic proclamation in both xiii 17 and xiv 17, and can be viewed as a symbolic action as well as a heart-felt response.

The intensity of personal expression within Jer. viii 18-23 is unique to the prophet Jeremiah. Taken as an indication of his psychological profile, it is no wonder that the prophet has been viewed as highly sensitive, emotionally reactant, and even weak. But, it is my view that these expressions must be read primarily in light of

the prophet's understanding of his prophetic vocation. He saw himself as intimately identified with the people. Their pain and brokenness, even though they would experience it in the future, became his as he saw the devastation wrought by Yahweh's judgment and the theological quandry emergent from errant orthodoxy. He was gripped and horrified by the vision of how deeply wounded the people were in their obduracy and by the failure of all of the skill of human healers (whether spiritual, political, or social) to restore wholeness (vs. 22). The weight of Jeremiah's burden was compounded by the fact that he alone among the prophets of his day could see the extent of the injury. The pattern of the others was to "dress the wound of my people as though it were not serious. 'Peace, peace,' they [said], when there [was] no peace." (Jer. viii 11; vi 14.) One of the expectations which accompanied the prophetic office was to intercede for the people for wholeness/peace (שלום). But that was something beyond Jeremiah's calling to provide. He could only see, grieve (cf. vs. 23), and warn. Jer. viii 18-23 is not a private lament, but a public, personal disclosure both of the appalling nature of the events which would unfold and of the extent of variance of this prophet's vocation from the expectations of the day. The integration of the unique and graphic expressions of grief within the material and the use of similar expressions within other contexts which are obviously oracular are evidence of his rhetorical purpose.

Jeremiah x 19-25

Jeremiah x 19 bears marked similarities with other verses with which we have dealt. It is an expression of suffering proclaimed in the first person singular. At least part of the suffering is caused by a "report" which is heard, much like the proleptic vision of viii 18 (cf. iv 21). The image of a tent being destroyed is utilized as in Jeremiah's cry of anguish in iv 19-21. Yet the context of x 19-25, as well as a few of its internal phrases, suggests that the passage is intended as an expression of the nation rather than Jeremiah personally. The passage, therefore, requires a detailed analysis for interpretation.

Jeremiah ix 22 - x 16, which immediately precedes this pericope, seems to belong together, though, as Bright points out, it has "undergone a complex history of transmission" as witness not only by internal analysis, but also by a fragment found at Qumran ($4QJer^b$), which preserves a shorter form of the Hebrew text in support of LXX.[84] Jer. x 17-25 seems to be more complementary to the thought of chapters vii-ix, which include miscellaneous materials with two major themes: "the stubborn and incurable sinfulness of the people, and the tragic fate that is about to overtake them."[85] Interspersed are expressions of the prophet's own despair over the situation (viii 8 - ix 2). But despite the affinities with these earlier sections, Jer. x 17-25 is to be found in its present location, and there is no evidence

from the ancient versions to suggest that it should be displaced. Thus, if we consider Jer. x 17-25 in its own context, it must be regarded as a new section based on themes treated previously. There is a clear break between verse 16, which concludes a section (x 3-16) contrasting the idols of the peoples with Yahweh, the true, living, and everlasting King, and verse 17 which reintroduces the imminent exile of the people from their land. Verses 17 and 18 act as a rapid transition between the hymn of faith and the expression of woe found side by side in the chapter.

Bright suggests that x 19-25 is to be read as a speech by Jeremiah on behalf of the nation. It is, therefore, delivered in the first person singular much like the personified lament of Jerusalem in Lam. i 9ff.[86] Certainly lines like "My sons have gone from me and are no more" (verse 20b) support this view, for it is difficult to understand to whom the prophet would be referring if this was his personal expression.

The LXX has taken another approach to the passage by identifying Yahweh as the speaker from verse 17 through 19a. In verse 19a, the possessive pronouns are in the second person singular, rather than the first person: "Alas for <u>your</u> destruction! <u>Your</u> wound is grievous." Verses 19b-22 seem to be placed in the mouth of the prophet with a reversion back to the first person possessives. At least this is true in the Ziegler edition,[87] though <u>Codex Vaticanus</u>, <u>Codex Sinaiticus</u>, and a variety of minuscules

witness to the continuation of the second person possessives through verse 20a. Jeremiah may well be speaking for the nation, although the LXX could be interpreted just as clearly as the prophet's own lament, even though the use of the second person singular possessive pronouns in verse 19a, which must refer to the nation, seem to coordinate well with the first person singular used thereafter. Verse 24 is definitely taken as a petition of the people. But here the pronouns in the LXX become first person plural, indicating a different style of speech which is in view when the prophet speaks for the nation. What can be safely said about the LXX is that it reflects a very early interpretive confusion regarding this passage. The confusion was even compounded further through scribal attempts to bring agreement between the pronouns in various later editions.

The Targum interprets the passage definitely as a personal lament of the prophet and it is this interpretation which is also followed by Kimchi.[88] In order to make this clear, the Targ. makes certain alterations. For example, "my sons have left me," which appears in the MT of verse 20 and is a problem if the passage relates to the prophet personally, is rendered as "my people are exiled" in the Targum. Furthermore, where the Targ. does interpret the passage as moving from the mouth of the prophet to that of the people (verse 23 rather than verse 24 as in LXX), a shift is made to the first person plural. Verses 24 and 25 move back to the mouth of the prophet, as he first pleads

for clemency for his own people (to whom he refers in the third person plural) and then for destruction of the nations who do not seek God's name. Kimchi indicates that the prophet's lament reflects his empathetic response to the suffering of the people. He comments on "my sons have left me" (verse 20) by saying that "because the people are like sons to the prophet, he chastises them like a father chastises his son, in case they might listen to him."[89] Verse 23, Kimchi interprets with his father as referring to the decision which Nebuchadnezzar made to come to Jerusalem rather than Ammon through the prompting of God. And in verse 24, he follows Rabbi Jonah in saying that here the "prophet is speaking with the tongue of Israel as with the tongue of the individual . . ." Here, Kimchi specifically designates a phenonenon which Bright assumes is true of the entire passage.

I follow the interpretation of Kimchi and would add the following observations. First, verses 17 and 18 reflect significant textual problems, as may be demonstrated in the ancient versions. Thus, since these verses set the stage for the interpretation of what follows, it is not surprising that there is confusion, which was perhaps compounded from the earliest history of transmission. Second, the relation of this passage with Jer. iv 19-22 should not be minimized. In both cases, deep anguish is expressed on receipt of a report of devastation (x 22, cf. iv 19c, 21). The rather archaic imagery of tents being destroyed is utilized to

express the destruction of houses (x 20, cf. iv 20). Finally, the blame for the destruction is declared, in one case (iv 22) resting with the "stupid" people who "have no understanding," and, in the other case (x 21), resting with the "stupid" shepherds who "have not sought the Lord." This association provides evidence that x 19-21 should be read as a personal lament of the prophet like that in iv 19-21. Third, it must, however, be pointed out that the prophet's personal anguish is intimately linked with the pain of his people. As we have seen (and will further observe), the language which Jeremiah utilizes in the expression of his own suffering is identical to that used elsewhere concerning the people. Therefore, it is not unusual that a passage of this kind can be viewed as both a personal and corporate expression. But it seems quite legitimate to consider Jer. x 19 in our study relating to the language of the prophet's personal suffering.

I shall have cause to refer to Jer. x 19 several times (particularly in the section on Jer. xv 18) in relation to the particular vocabulary used. Therefore, in this study I will refer primarily to the vocabulary and other material which is unique to this passage rather than repeating the information.

אוֹי לִי ("woe is me") as an interjection of anguish appears only four times in Jeremiah. In iv 31 it is the "cry of the daughter of Zion;" in xv 10 it is the exclamation of the prophet himself and in xlv 3 the prophet

is quoting Baruch. In each case it is an expression signaling grave anguish.[90]

In this case the anguish is designated as עַל-שִׁבְרִי ("because of my brokenness"). As in viii 21, the use of שֶׁבֶר could be an indication of the prophet's own injury or brokenness concerning the vision of desolation. Surely his wholeness is gone and only a sense of woe remains. However, שֶׁבֶר does not appear alone in this context, but is accompanied by נַחְלָה מַכָּתִי . מכה appears elsewhere in parallel with שֶׁבֶר (xiv 17; xxx 12; Nah. iii 19; Isa. xxx 26) and, in fact, in the first three of these instances נַחְלָה also occurs. In each case the juxtaposition of these particular words refers to the destruction which God has brought upon the people. He has wounded them with the wound of the enemy (xxx 14b: כְּי מַכַּת אוֹיֵב הִכִּיתִיךָ). It was a mighty blow (xiv 17c: שֶׁבֶר גָּדוֹל) and the wound is sorely infected (xiv 17c: מַכָּה נַחְלָה מְאֹד). This might be significant evidence supporting the interpretation that this verse should be applied to the people rather than to the prophet, if the individual words were not used so freely elsewhere specifically in relation to the prophet. Furthermore, the fact that the prophet laments the destruction of "my tent" in verse 20, provides a ready explanation for his words here. Jer. x 19a is not a statement of the prophet's woe concerning his personal brokenness, but rather his woe concerning the part of the total desolation or destruction which affects him. He is not exempt from living through the

judgment. Even as he is instructed to weep day and night in Jer. xiv 17 as a picture of God's response to the destruction, so also he laments his own personal loss of home and companionship (x 20) which the destruction will produce.

The interpretation which I am proposing for the first line of the verse helps us, I believe, to understand more clearly the rather unusal phrase in the second line. In response to this pain over personal loss, the prophet thinks:[91] "Surely this is a torment/sickness but I will bear it" (אַךְ זֶה חֳלִי וְאֶשָּׂאנוּ). חֳלִי , like much of the rest of the vocabulary of pain and suffering which we have evaluated, is somewhat fluid in the meanings which may be attached to it, though in general it refers to "sickness." In Deut. xxviii 59-61, it is specifically seen as a literal, physical affliction which Yahweh will bring as one of the curses for covenant disobedience. II Chron. xxi 18 (cf. verse 15) gives a dramatic picture of one such illness which came upon Jehoram: "And Yahweh smote him in his bowels with a sickness for which there was no healing" (וְנָגַף יְהוָה בְּמֵעָיו לְחֳלִי לְאֵין מַרְפֵּא). The vocabulary of this verse has reflexes in Jeremiah's laments (cf. the use of מֵעַי in iv 19 and the use of רפא in xvii 14), but this is quite different from the use of חֳלִי in the context of x 19. In Jeremiah vi 7, the only other appearance of חֳלִי in Jeremiah, the word is applied to the inner brokenness and corruption of Jerusalem which threatens to bring about her downfall through God's judgment: "As a well keeps its water

fresh, so she keeps fresh her wickedness. Violence and destruction are heard in her; ever before me are sickness and wounds (חֳלִי וּמַכָּה).[92] A similar figurative use is in Hosea v 13 which describes Ephraim's discovery of his wound brought by judgment (verse 11) and his subsequent attempt to find healing from the human resources of Assyria. Here חָלִי is parallel with מָרוֹר ("sore, boil", cf. use in Jer. xxx 13).[93] Again the nation in its rebellion is described as smitten in Isa. i 5b: כָּל-רֹאשׁ לָחֳלִי וְכָל-לֵבָב דַּוָּי ("the whole head is sick and the whole heart is faint"). Note here the parallel construction with דַּוָּי , cf. Jer. viii 18. In each of these figurative occurrences, the image created by the use of חָלִי is one of inner unwholeness, disease and weakness. It brings torment to its victim and healing is required. In x 19, Jeremiah could be saying that his forlorn emotional state over his vision and the potential personal loss is like a disease which is infecting him and rendering him ineffective. He knows that he will suffer with the people when judgment comes (verse 20), even though he knows the cause of the destruction (verse 21) and how it could be avoided. In this light, verses 23 and 24 become the plea of Jeremiah casting himself on the knowledgeable mercy of God, who alone can direct the outcome of all of this justly. But let us return to verse 19. The occurrence of וְאֶשְׁמְעָה , which grammatically forms a final clause due to the inclusion of the conjunctive-waw, is admittedly awkward. Bright apparently ignores the grammar

as it appears and loosely translates the line: "I who had thought this to be a grief I could bear!"[94] But this does not capture the sense well. נשׂא (Q) appears in Jer. xv 15 in connection with the prophet's bearing of scorn (חֶרְפָּה) for Yahweh, and in xxxi 19 in connection with Ephraim bearing reproach (again חֶרְפָּה)(cf. Ps. lxix 8), so it is not an unusual verb for Jeremiah to apply to a process of endurance. Ps. lxxxviii 16 includes the phrase נָשָׂאתִי אֵמֶיךָ ("I bear your terrors") which has the connotation of "to suffer under," though the ancient versions clearly understand the word to indicate endurance.[95] The only verse in which חֳלִי and נשׂא appear together is intriguingly Isa. liii 4. In verse 3, the "Servant" is described as "a man of pains and acquainted with sickness/torment" (אִישׁ מַכְאֹבוֹת וִידוּעַ חֹלִי). חֳלִי seems to have a sense here which goes beyond physical sickness or even sickness used in a figurative sense. The Servant is described in this manner because he is "despised and rejected" (נִבְזֶה וַחֲדַל אִישִׁים), and חֳלִי refers to the torment which he knows first-hand. In verse 4, the opening phrase reads: אָכֵן חֳלָיֵנוּ הוּא נָשָׂא ("surely our torments he himself bore"). The meaning of נשׂא is clearly "to bear, carry, or endure" (cf. the parallel with סבל [Q] meaning "to bear, carry, support"). An alternative would be that נשׂא might mean "to wear" as in Job xxxi 36, where Job says that he will wear (נשׂא) his indictment on his shoulder for the same reason that a person would wear a crown as a mark of identity. If this

latter possibility fits Jer. x 19, חֳלִי could perhaps be seen as a play on the word חֲלִי ("ornament" as in Prov. xxv 12 and Cant., vii 2). But then the inference of the line would be that Jeremiah was proud to display his sickness, which does not seem to fit the context. In Prov. xviii 14 the statement is made that רוּחַ אִישׁ יְכַלְכֵּל מַחֲלֵהוּ וְרוּחַ נְכֵאָה מִי יְשָׂאֶנָּה ("The spirit of a man can endure his sickness; but who can bear a broken spirit?"). Here כוּל (cf. Jer. xx 9; vi 11) is parallel with נשׂא , and the indication is that "it is a man's spirit which enables him to 'contain' his illness, that is, to impose a measure of control on it, to cope with it in such a way that it is not permitted to deter him from life and its responsibilities."[96] It is against the background of this kind of thinking that I would interpret Jer. x 19. Unlike Jeremiah's cry that he cannot endure the "fire" in his bones in xx 9, and that he cannot contain (כוּל) God's prophecies of doom in vi 11, here it is not his proclamations which are causing him to suffer as directly as his response to his own personal loss. His spirit, he reasons, should not be broken by this, and so he will endure the sickness which the vision has caused within him. Thus, the line is one in which the prophet asserts his personal strength.

The ancient versions reflect the MT of Jer. x 19 quite closely, with the exception of the LXX as we have noted above. Two minor points, which are interesting in their interpretive impact, should be noted, however. The most

striking is that all of the ancient versions (as well as Aquila and Symmachus) assume a first person singular possessive pronoun in relation to חֳלִי . As this is not reflected in the MT (nor is such a form attested elsewhere in the OT), where it would probably have had a consonantal form חלי (cf. attested חליו), it suggests either that the MT has lost a yôd through haplography, or that, more likely, the versions assumed an emphasis on the first person possessive due to the influence of the two which appear in the first line and the first person singular verb form which follows in the last phrase. The addition of the possessive actually helps the line to read more smoothly.

The fluidity of the meaning of חֳלִי is underlined by an analysis of the various ways it is rendered. In this verse, LXX renders it with τραῦμα ("wound, hurt"), indicating an attempt to move away from the idea of sickness to one of injury, while in vi 7 it is rendered with ἀσέβεια ("impiety, profaneness"). In Isa. liii 3, 4, it is μαλακία ("weakness, tenderness") and ἁμαρτία ("failure, error, sin") respectively, and in Isa. i 5, it appears as πόνος ("pain, distress"). Actually this variety (in addition to the more common "sickness" -- πόσος) reflects a much broader interpretive thrust than the occurrences in the MT would suggest, so it should be clear that the translator assumes an interpretive fluidity.

We may now summarize the expressions of Jeremiah's suffering as seen in x 19. First, it appears that we have

here still another source of suffering. The prophet laments his own personal loss of home and companionship, which he will sustain because of the obstinate foolishness of the nation's leaders in not heeding his objurgations. This passage is not merely a corporate lament, but an indication of the intensity of Jeremiah's involvement with the community. The brokenness of the community becomes his brokenness. There is always an interaction between the struggle of the prophet and the destiny of the nation. The national disintegration has implications for the prophet's own life. But, even though this suffering also brings unwholeness, it is a kind of suffering which he can and will endure. The vocabulary is seen again to be quite fluid in meaning, though in this case it is the combination of the words which enables us to gain a clearer insight into its intent.

As in several of the previous passages, Jeremiah's words stand in sharp contrast to those of his peers who were prophesying peace. In his identification with the brokenness which would be suffered by all, he called attention to himself as a fellow sufferer, and, therefore, as one who was sympathetic to the pain which even the proclamation of such a message would cause. His self-disclosure was meant to add both legitimacy and impact to his plea to "listen" to the signs of the times (vs. 22) and to follow him in his personal prayer of repentance (vss. 23-25).[97]

Passages of Intercession

This is a good point to comment briefly on other examples of corporate confession and prophetic intercession which are recorded in these early chapters of Jeremiah. While these cannot be viewed strictly as self-disclosures, they nevertheless are indications of both Jeremiah's public role in this regard (which was a distinct element of the prophetic orthodoxy of his day) and the agony and confusion which was caused when this role was denied him by God.

Examples of corporate confession are found in Jer. iii 24-25; xiv 7-9; and xiv 19-22. These last two sections, which shall be our focus here, are both a part of a much larger unit of material (xiv 1 - xv 4) which has been woven together from various Jeremianic materials. The primary setting is a drought in Judah (vss. 1-6, 22), but the judgments of God, which included sword as well as famine and disease, are also brought into the final composition (vss. 11, 15-18). The section is arranged as two communal laments (xiv 1-16 and xiv 17 - xv 4), each consisting of the following units:

A. Editorial heading - xiv 1, 17a
B. Description of circumstances - xiv 2-6, 17-18.
   1. Statement of grief - xiv 2, 17
   2. Particulars of suffering - xiv 3-6, 18
C. Liturgy of penitence and petition (cf. Hos. vi 1-3) - xiv 7-9, 19-22
   1. Cry of penitence - xiv 7, 20
   2. Plaintive questions to Yahweh - xiv 8-9a, 19 & 22a
   3. Expression of confidence - 9b, 22b
   4. Appeal for deliverance - 9b, 21

D. Reply from Yahweh - xiv 10, xv 2
E. Divine dialogue with the prophet - xiv 11-16; xv 1-4

Each of the two parts follows the traditional form of the communal lament (Pss. lxxix, lxxx, lxxiv; cf. xxviii, lvi, lxix). And each includes both a poetic segment (xiv 2-10; 17-22 & xv 2b) and a prose segment (xiv 11-16; xv 1-4, excluding vs. 2b). Many scholars have argued that the prose passages should be considered Deuteronomic additions, or at least attributed to a Deuteronomic author who was incorporating the words of Jeremiah.[98] It can readily be seen that the prose portions arise from and can be understood only in relation to the poetry. There is little question that the whole passage is the literary arrangement of some editor(s) or other. But, as Thompson points out, the more important question "is whether Jeremiah himself held the views here expressed and whether Jeremiah wrote prose something like what we have here."[99] In this regard, there can be no doubt that the prose as well as the poetry portions express the authentic concerns of Jeremiah as indicated elsewhere (e.g. complaints concerning false prophets: ii 8; iv 9; v 13; vi 13--all in poetic sections).

The striking element of each of the laments is found in the conclusion. Whereas the traditional form of both the communal and individual lament concluded with an oracle of assurance from Yahweh, here each lament concludes with an oracle of doom. If, as we have seen, the prophets of Jeremiah's time understood themselves at least partially as

intercessors whose role was to procure "peace/wholeness" for the people, this reversal of the words of assurance would have caused no little conflict in the heart of Jeremiah. It is no wonder that it is in this context that dialogue is recorded concerning the messages of the false prophets (vss. 13-15). Jeremiah's understanding of his vocation was at stake as well as his credentials of legitimacy in the eyes of the people. And it is little wonder that it is here that we also have a word denying the efficacy of Jeremiah's intercession (xv 1; cf. vii 16 and xi 14 where the prophet is forbidden to intercede). Again, we have a recorded example of Jeremiah at odds with the prophetic orthodoxy of the age as well as with his understanding of his prophetic heritage. It seems likely that Jeremiah saw both Moses and Samuel as models for his own vocation. In each of their ministries, intercession for the rebellious people achieved substantial results (cf. Exod. xxxii 11-14, 30-32; Num. xiv 13-19; Deut. ix 13-29; I Sam. vii 8-9; xii 19-25).[100] Rashi explains that Moses and Samuel were able to win God's favor when they pleaded for the people, because they first persuaded the people to repent and only then pleaded for God's pardon. Jeremiah, on the other hand, had not won the people to repentance. In similar circumstance, even Moses and Samuel would have pleaded without success. But whatever the reason for the prohibition on intercession, it marked Jeremiah's career with a unique and inscrutable characteristic.

THE PROPHET'S LAMENTS

With the beginning of Jer. xi, we move into a new dimension in the self-disclosures of Jeremiah. Whereas the passages with which we have dealt thus far have recorded the prophet's reactions to various elements associated with his prophetic vocation (his horror at the visions of destruction, his strong identification with the plight of the people, his anguish in light of the fast approaching doom), in the next series of passages the prophet struggles directly with that vocation in didactic dialogue with Yahweh. This material is unique within the corpus of prophetic literature. Jeremiah is portrayed not only as one who speaks personally concerning his reactions to what he sees and is asked to communicate to the people, but also as one who interacts with God directly concerning his own questions about historical and theological events and about his painful and mysterious destiny as a prophet.

Jer. xi 1-14 sets the scene for the contextual transition. While the placement, structure, and particular emphasis of this passage are largely the work of an editor who was attempting to provide a conclusion to the earlier oracular material and to introduce what would follow, this material should be viewed as basically Jeremianic. It is as "Deuteronomic" in style as any passage in the Book with its

strong emphasis on covenantal language,[1] but as Bright points out, ". . . there is no reason to doubt that it reflects Jeremiah's actual sentiments and activity."[2] A good example of the restructuring of original material can be seen in vss. 2 and 3a which have the effect of converting God's words to the prophet into a message for the people. This is an editorial tendency, and these verses should be viewed as a secondary insertion. The opening verses (vss. 1, 3b-5) are addressed personally to Jeremiah as God reminds him of the terms of the covenant which was made with his forefathers (cf. Exod. xix 5,6; Deut. vi 20-25; vii 8; xi 8-9; etc.) and the curse which accompanies disobedience (cf. Deut. xxvii 15-26). Jeremiah acknowledges this covenant agreement with "So be it, Lord!" In vss. 6-8, Jeremiah is addressed as the messenger who is to continue to proclaim the terms of covenant obedience to the people in spite of their long history of rebellion and punishment. This is in accord with Jer. vi 10-12. The next verses (vss. 9-14) ring with the hopelessness of the task. The people will not listen. Their doom is now sure. The disaster of judgment has begun to unfold. Yahweh will not listen to them, and it will obviously do no good for them to cry out to their idols.[3] Finally, it would futile even for Jeremiah to intercede for them. Thus, the tone is set for Jeremiah's closer scrutiny of the ways of God in his life. Proclamation is futile. Intercession is denied. Persecution is imminent (cf. xi 18-19). And questions concerning his

prophetic vocation in light of these developments and the expectations of the prophetic orthodoxy which surrounded him abound.

Jeremiah xi 18-23

In its context, Jer. xi 18-23 has affinities both with the transition material which precedes it and with the opening section of the next chapter (xii 1-6). However, there are significant problems in relating the material of these verses directly with either. Indeed the prose style (except for verse 20) has a greater compatibility with earlier portions of chapter xi than with what follows, but vs. 18 seems to arise out of nowhere with the pronominal suffix ("their evil deeds") without antecendent. Most of the commentators have sought a solution to the problems through a logical rearrangement of the verses of xi 18-23 with those of xii 1-6, but these are grossly speculative in the absence of any textual support and largely based on fallacious presuppositions concerning the orderliness of a given literary composition and the importance of linear continuity.[4] A more restrained and judicial approach exegetically is to assume that xi 18-23 and xii 1-6 should be evaluated separately, but with an eye to some of the forces which have drawn them together here. Indeed as we evaluate the two passages closely, we shall also note that each is composed of still smaller fragments which have played a part in determining the final composition as we

have it.

The fact that Jer. xi 18-23 is primarily a prose passage should not be neglected. Since it is generally assumed that the prose material, though quite often Jeremianic in content, contains more editorial modification and elaboration than the poetry, I would suggest that the position of xi 18-23 should be viewed as an attempt to supply a context for xii 1-6. Apart from xii 6, which may itself be a later addition to this passage as an attempt to explain vs. 5 (see below), there is no specific indication in xii 1-6 of the source of the prophet's persecution. The editor assumed that the struggle of Jeremiah in xii 1-5 was the persecution by his kinsmen, a situation which was explained in a prose fragment from the prophet also at the editor's disposal.[5] Thus the prose was inserted ineptly as an introduction, undergoing certain minor modifications to link the two passages together. One such modification was the addition of the verse of poetry in xi 20. Except for insignificant variations, the verse is identical to xx 12 which should be considered its original context. It has been copied into the present location because of its affinity with xii 3, although it is quite unnecessary and disruptive as an addition to the prose of xi 18-23.

Thus, it is my view that xi 18-23 and xxii 1-6 should be interpreted separately, each as an authentic reflection of the prophet's suffering, but without a necessary exegetical link. The relationship between the two passages

was the mistaken idea of an editor, which obviously did not work well anyway if the secondary materials are any indication. Let us now look more directly at xi 18-23.

Verse 18 begins immediately with textual difficulties. The opening waw in the MT, which is not reproduced in the LXX, Pesh., or Vulg., is a possible indication that there was originally something else which preceded these verses. This would account for the laconic character of the passage as well as for the unevenness in the text.[6] LXX and Pesh. proceed by reading יהוה as a vocative and the verb as an imperative, presumably from a pointing הוֹדִיעֵנִי ("O Lord, make known to me . . ."), while the MT and Targ. vocalize the verb as a perfect (הוֹדִיעֲנִי --"And the Lord made known to me . . ."). Neither alternative is entirely satisfactory when taken with the 2nd person address of the latter part of the verse. The Vulg. attempts to smooth the unevenness with Tu autem, Domine, demonstrasti mihi, . . .("You, O Lord, have shown me . . ."; reading the verb as הורעתני), but this suggestion is more expedient than textually plausible. Since I assume that there was originally a more satisfactory introduction to this passage which has been lost to us, it seems wisest to retain the reading of the MT and to view the versions (with the exception of the Targ. which reads with the MT) as attempts to deal with a recognizably rough text. In any case the meaning is similar. The prophet was in the position of being unaware of what was happening around him. If he asked the Lord for illumination, there is an

indication that he perceived something of the impending danger, but it is more likely that he was completely unaware of the opposition arising from his own kinsmen.

At any rate, the Lord caused him to see the plot against him. LXX reads εἶδον ("I saw") which indicates רָאִיתִי rather than the MT הרְאִיתַנִי ("you caused me to see") in the later part of the verse, but this is likely another adjustment to the text and is not supported by the other ancient versions, Aquila, or Symmachus.[7] Baumgartner emphasizes that the verb is "show" rather than "tell" as one of several common motifs of lament present here.[8] Certainly this is consistent with the proleptic visions which are revealed at other points in Jeremiah's career. מעלל is a very common word in Jeremiah, occurring in both poetry and prose passages. Of the 29 appearances in the prophets, 17 are in Jeremiah, an indication of the distinctly Jeremianic character of the word and the authenticity of this passage as coming from the prophet. The word occurs only three times in the Deuteronomic literature. Here it connotes the evil actions of Jeremiah's persecutors (cf. iv 4, 18; etc.). As already noted, the pronominal suffix is without direct antecedent, although vss. 21-23 supplies "the men of Anathoth" as the antagonists.

Vs. 19 opens with the prophet comparing himself with a lamb in the phrase כֶּבֶשׂ אַלּוּף . There is some uncertainty in the versions as to the exact meaning of אַלּוּף . LXX and

Pesh. stress the idea of innocence (LXX ἄκακον ; Pesh. ܛܝܒܐ), while the Targ. focuses on its chosenness (בָּחִיר), and the Vulg. on its meekness/tameness (mansuetus, cf. also Aquila and Symmachus). Rashi takes a different approach (following Dunash and Judah ben Qorish) in equating ככבש אלוף with כבש ופר ("like a lamb and young bull"). He notes Deut. xxviii 4, 18 as an example of אלף meaning "cattle" and he explains the absence of the conjunction by citing Hab. iii 11 and Isa. xxxviii 14 as similar constructions. Rashi also notes that Menahem interpreted the phrase as "a great ram," taking אלוף in the sense of "chief." Kimchi's interpretation is the same as Rashi's. Cornill states that in 111 of the 116 occurrences of כבש in the OT, the reference is to a sacrificial lamb. Thus the prophet sees himself as an offering to God.[9] Much more likely, however, is that אלוף retains here its established use to describe a trusting relationship (cf. Ps. lv 14; Mic. vii 5; Prov. ii 17; xvi 28; Jer. iii 4; xiii 21; etc.). The lamb is not only tame, but is like a trusting friend--a pet which cannot perceive danger because he has no experience of anything which can potentially do him ill. Jeremiah portrays himself as a great innocent in the face of his enemies. Had God not revealed the danger, he could have been led away to slaughter easily.

The next phrase is straightforward and indicates again that Jeremiah was not aware of the schemes against him. Among the versions, only the LXX repunctuates the sentence,

connecting וְלֹא־יָדַעְתִּי with the preceding phrase (ἀγόμενον τοῦ θύεσθαι οὐκ ἔγνων --"led to the slaughter unawares"), and this is corrected by Symmachus. Chambers finds the secrecy of the plot here to contrast with the apparent openness of the attempts on Jeremiah's life in vs. 21, but the emphasis in vs. 19 is not so much on secrecy as it is on Jeremiah's trusting naïvité.[10]

There are far more interpretive difficulties with the rest of vs. 19 where the specific threat of Jeremiah's enemies is quoted. That this is a quotation is specified in all of the ancient versions by the addition of the standard introduction (LXX: λέγοντες ; Targ. אָמְרִין ; Vulg.: dicentes; Pesh. ܐܡܪ̈ܝܢ), although this is hardly necessary for the clarity of the verse. In addition, the LXX also includes Δεῦτε καὶ ("Come hither, and . . ."). It is the next phrase which is the difficult one. The MT reads נַשְׁחִיתָה עֵץ בְּלַחְמוֹ ("let us destroy tree with its bread/food"), the meaning of which is cryptic at best and is rendered precisely only by the Pesh. LXX renders ἐμβάλωμεν ξύλον εἰς τὸν ἄρτον αὐτοῦ ("let us throw wood into his bread"), "wood" probably meaning some kind of poison with the antecedent of the pronoun, which is related to "bread," specifically designating the prophet. It is uncertain what verb is being read. BHS suggests that it is נַשְׁלִיכָה or נָשִׂימָה , although neither of these are attested elsewhere. The idea of poisoning is specified in the Targ. as well (נְרֵמֵי סַמָּא דְמוֹתָא נְסֵיכְלוֹהִי --"Let us throw lethal poison into his

food"), and it is this interpretation that is followed by Kimchi who glosses "wood" with "a tree which was deadly poison." Sperber suggests a Hebrew Vorlage of either נשליכה or נשיתה for Aramaic נרמי , but as in the case of the LXX it is without attestation.[11] Burkitt draws upon the similarity of the LXX and Targ. to formulate his explanation of how the MT came to be corrupted from an original which he reconstructs as לכו ונשיתה עצב לחמו .[12] While both his proposal and the steps by which he thinks that the text came to be corrupted are well thought through and rather clever, there are weaknesses to be found at virtually every point of his argument. It is not at all clear that either the LXX or Targ. reflect an underlying Heb. שית , as I have already indicated. Furthermore, the Vulg. has mittamus lignum in panem eius ("let us send wood into his food"), which again takes the suffix of בלחמו as referring to Jeremiah, but seems to indicate that the verb should be read נִשְׁלְחָה. And Symmachus reproduces the MT verb accurately with διαφθειρωμεν .

In light of the difficulties and of no readily available solution from the versions, it is my view that the consonantal text should be retained. Dahood has suggested that בלחמו should be read as the root לֶחַ ("sap/vigor") with a mêm-enclitic plus suffix, pointed בְּלֶחְמוֹ .[13] This is a feasible solution, and it is easy to see how the form was misunderstood by the scribes and pointed "with his bread." The metaphorical use of לח can be seen in Deut. xxxiv 7,

while its use in describing a living tree can be seen in Ezek. xxi 3. In the wisdom matrix, the image of a flourishing tree is used frequently (Ps. i 3; cf. Jer. xvii 8; Amos ii 9) to describe the vitality of human life. Thus, the phrase is to be read in parallel to the next phrase, "Let us cut him off from the land of the living." Like a tree, he will be robbed of life and cut off, so that even "his name will be remembered no more." The three-fold expression describes complete devastation for the prophet.

Vss. 21-23, introduced by לכן and including God's punishment for those who oppose the prophet, follows vs. 19 very naturally. For the first time in the passage, the men of Anathoth are identified as the antagonists. Their young men who go to battle will die by the sword, the children who stay home will die by famine, and none will be spared from the calamity. There are relatively few textual difficulties in the passage.[14] Of greater interest to our study is the record of the threat which is made against Jeremiah in the latter half of vs. 21. The men of Anathoth say, "Do not prophesy in the name of Yahweh, and you will not die by our hands" (לֹא תִנָּבֵא בְּשֵׁם יהוה וְלֹא תָמוּת בְּיָדֵנוּ). LXX alters the reading slightly by utilizing a different negative construction to introduce the second clause (εἰ δὲ μή --"otherwise you will die by our hands"). This may be a rendering of וְאִם לֹא as BHS suggests, but it is not to be preferred. The Targ., Vulg., and Aquila all follow the MT closely, and the Pesh. renders it paraphrastically to bring

out the meaning. Important in this statement is the intimate link between the prophet's vocation and the threat which was being made against him. The prophet was commanded to quit speaking if he wanted to save himself. It is difficult to understand exactly why the people of his hometown would feel this way. One can only speculate that in speaking the unpopular message of the nation's past and present failure to obey God, Jeremiah had seriously offended the villagers. Either they were reacting defensively against the message itself, or they were disgraced by their filial connections with this prophet of doom. In either case, their opposition to the prophetic endeavor was also opposition to Yahweh, who had given the prophet his words and had commanded him to speak. Hence, they would suffer the fate of the rest of the people.

An association between this passage and Jer. xviii 18-23 cannot be overlooked, although they should be read as reflecting discrete circumstances. In this latter passage, it is Jeremiah who requests that those who have devised plots against him should receive a retribution which sounds very much like what is promised by God in xi 22-23. The prayer of Jeremiah in xi 20, which I have already suggested is secondary to this passage but was associated with the context very early,[15] is similar in perspective to xviii 18-23 and carries this same request.

Jer. xi 20, which also bears an affinity with xii 3 in both structure and content, is Jeremiah's request for

vindication, presented to Yahweh as the righteous judge to whom he has entrusted his case. The verse is full of interesting legal terminology and theological affirmation. As in vs. 18, it opens with a waw which is not reflected in the LXX (though in this case it is included in the other ancient versions), but is suitable as a transition from the quotation which directly precedes it in its present context. Only "Yahweh" is used as the epithet in the LXX, while the MT includes יהוה צְבָאוֹת ("Lord of Hosts"). This latter designation is entirely appropriate both to the style of the prophet (cf. Jer. x 16; xv 16 and 82 times in Jer.) and to the context of legal judgment and divine retribution.[16]

Yahweh is subsequently described by the prophet as the one "who judges righteously and tests the kidneys and heart" (שֹׁפֵט צֶדֶק בֹּחֵן כְּלָיוֹת וָלֵב). Duhm points out that this is the first formulation of the idea that God knows the inner thoughts of people in the OT,[17] although this view must rely on the exilic dating of such passages as Pss. cxxxix 23, xliv 22, vii 10, and xvii 3. The inclusion of both anatomical references suggests that Yahweh penetrates both the affections and the understanding.[18] Even the hidden motives are open to him. His scrutiny is thorough and his testing is definitive. Therefore his judgments may be trusted as altogether righteous. The affirmation of these cola form the basis of Jeremiah's expectation that Yahweh would indeed defend his cause.

The persecution of the prophet because he has spoken

the word of Yahweh is no less than persecution of God himself, and thus Jeremiah has every right to expect God to justify himself in this matter. This is likely the thought behind Jeremiah's request in the next colon: "Let me see your vengeance upon them" (אֶרְאֶה נִקְמָתְךָ מֵהֶם).[19] Such a cry was not unusual in Israel among various godly men in their oppression (cf. Ps. xvii 13f.; cxlix 7; Isa. xxxiv 8; xxxv 4; etc.). The word נקמה is utilized ten times in Jeremiah, and the sense of "vengeance" seems to be clear (cf. xx 10), rather than "requital" or "deliverance from them" (as suggested by Mendenhall).[20] It is Jeremiah's assumption that this is the necessary sentence of justice if he is to continue to speak as God had promised (cf. i 8).

The final statement of the verse is so arranged that "to you" (אֵלֶיךָ) is in the emphatic position. The prophet declares once again his confidence in God to whom he has presented his case (רִיב). The legal terminology is significant, in that it suggests that Jeremiah assumes the right to plead his case against these people before God. He is here in the position of the prosecuting attorney. The verb גָּלִיתִי has encouraged more than a fitting amount of discussion in the secondary literature. From the root גלה , which appears four times in Jeremiah (xi 20; xx 12; xxx 6; xlix 10), it should be translated as "I have revealed my case." Rowley (following Duhm), Rudolph, Bright and others have thought it better to emend the text to גַּלּוֹתִי from the root גלל , which is then translated as "rolled upon" or

"entrusted."[21] The reason that an emendation is thought necessary is that it is inconsistent for the prophet to suggest that he must "reveal" anything to the God who tests everything (xi 20a). The references which are given to support the emendation are Pss. xx 9 and xxxvii 5, but in neither case is the interpretation of the verb clear, as witnessed by the variations in the ancient versions. For example, in Ps. xxxvii 5, LXX employs the word ἀποκάλυψον ("reveal") to render the verb (which is also utilized in LXX of Jer. xi 20), while in Ps. xx 9, LXX has ἤλπισεν ("rely on"). The case for the emendation is weak. On the other hand, it is my view that the MT is entirely appropriate. גלה [P] is used most frequently in the OT in the sense of "revealing nakedness," either for a sexual act or to shame someone (cf. Lev. xviii; xx; Ezek. xvi 37; xxii 10; xxiii 10, 18; Hos. ii 12; Nahum iii 5; etc.). The sense is "to completely expose" or "to strip of any concealment." Hence, in Isa. xxvi 21, "the earth will disclose (גִּלְתָה) the blood shed upon her; she will conceal her slain no longer" (cf. Job xii 22; Prov. xi 13; Mic. i 6; Isa. xvi 3; lvii 8; Jer. xlix 10). The verb is often connected with legal terminology (cf. Ps. xcviii 2; Job xx 27; Lam. iii 14; iv 22), and, in fact, Prov. xxv 9 contains a juxtaposition of גלה and ריב as here (רִיבְךָ רִיב אֶת-רֵעֶךָ וְסוֹד אַחֵר אַל-תְּגַל --"If you argue your case with a neighbor, do not disclose another man's counsel . . .). Jeremiah's statement is an affirmation that he has laid his case bare before the

righteous judge. None of the facts which the prophet has come to know has been held back. Since God's understanding is exhaustive, he is in a position to know that the case as argued represents the truth.

Yahweh's reply to the case as it stands in the canonical text is represented in vss. 21-23, which has already been discussed. Indeed, those who seek the prophet's life will themselves meet disaster. However, the time period which is given for their destruction ("the time of their punishment," vs. 23b) is probably the battle which will mean doom to the rest of Judah as well. Judgment will not fall immediately. The prophet may or may not have understood this word from Yahweh. His understanding of God's righteous judgment appeared to require a more immediate demonstration of justice. But such was not God's plan, as illustrated in Jer. xii 5. The circumstances for the prophet would get worse before they were likely to get better.

Jeremiah xii 1-6

Apart from the personal reference and application to Jeremiah which appears as part of Yahweh's response in vs. 6, this passage does not read as much like a personal lament as it does a forensic dialogue concerning the injustice which persists in the prosperity of the wicked. Sandwiched as it is between xi 18-23 and xii 6, the context of xii 1-5 suggests that the discussion arose primarily because of the prophet's persecution. Indeed, the persecution might be one

example of the kind of injustice about which Jeremiah speaks, but the interpretation of this passage should not be limited by this setting. It seems likely that this section (perhaps including vs. 6) had an original history quite separate from xi 18-23 and that the two were eventually placed together with the prose passage forming an introduction to the poetry. The association was enhanced by the affinity of xi 20 and xii 3 as well as the reference to kinsmen in xii 6.

Baumgartner has analyzed the structure of the passage as a modification of the "individual lament" with the following structure:[22]

I. Introduction - vs. 1a
II. Question and reproach - vss. 1b, 2
III. Motive of innocence - vs. 3a
IV. Prayer for revenge - vs. 3b
V. Lament - vs. 4
VI. Answer in the form of divine speech consisting of two comparisons (vs. 5) and two applications (vs. 6)

While the structural analysis is sound, the passage bears the tone of a legal complaint as well as a lament, and vs. 4 includes characteristics of the communal lament (corporate crisis, cf. xiv 1-6) as well. Rather than concluding with an oracle of reassurance, which was traditional in the cultic setting of the individual lament, Yahweh's word to the prophet here is far from reassuring. The form is therefore a mixed one. Jeremiah has borrowed traditional forms and motifs, but has utilized them in a very personal way. Hence, the passage should not be read as a liturgical expression (Reventlow), but rather as a carefully framed

self-disclosure of an issue of theological and personal concern for the prophet.

The struggle, which the prophet feels, is evident from the introductory lines (vs. la). The verse opens with an affirmation of God's character: צַדִּיק אַתָּה יהוה ("You are righteous, Lord"). The predicate adjective is in the emphatic position. צַדִּיק is used widely throughout the OT in reference to God, and the meaning is that God by definition is right. He is the standard by which all else is to be judged (cf. xi 20). It is this fact which has created a confusion for the prophet (cf. Kimchi), since he cannot understand his experience of the injustice of life in light of this fundamental affirmation. Holladay prefers to read צַדִּיק as "innocent," rather than "righteous," since he views the latter as expressing the ethical rather than the legal context which is preferred here. He supports his view by referring to II Kings x 9, although the adjective is applied to the people in this case rather than to God.[23] Certainly the concepts of righteousness and innocence must stand together (cf. Ps. xcii 16; Exod. ix 27), but in Holladay's interpretation this is not an appeal to the righteous judge for an explanation, but a legal complaint against him for breach of contract (similar to the accusations of Job ix 14-24). However, the essential question of the passage relates to the wider issue of the distribution of God's justice on a corporate as well as individual scale. The passage should not be reduced to the private protestations

of one who felt that he had been individually wronged. Rather, the dialogue represents Jeremiah's struggle with a question which occupied his whole generation, and which had taken on new dimensions in his own life as a consequence of his vocation.

The possibility of reading the introduction in a variety of ways is largely due to the interpretive ambiguity of the next phrases. The phrase כִּי אָרִיב אֵלֶיךָ , for example as been variously read as a conditional clause ("if I were to argue with you"),[24] a contradictory clause ("even though I contend with you"),[25] a temporal clause ("whenever I bring my case to you"),[26] a resultant clause ("therefore I bring my case to you"),[27] and as an asseverative clause ("I will dispute with you").[28] Indeed, the conjunction כִּי has a great deal of flexibility. Since the opening statement is such a strong affirmation, I prefer to take the second clause as an equally positive result. It is precisely because Yahweh is righteous, that Jeremiah can and should bring his case before him. The root ר״ב is frequently attached to legal disputation, and certainly the use of other legal terminology here (e.g. מִשְׁפָּטִים "matters of justice") supports the forensic tone. However, it is not necessary to interpret these phrases as an indication that the prophet is bringing litigation against Yahweh. In Jeremiah, the verb ר״ב [Q] is utilized six times (Jer. ii 9 - twice; ii 29; xii 1; l 34; li 36), in each case with a legal background. In ii 9, a covenant lawsuit is brought by

Yahweh against his people for their apostasy. The grammatical construction which appears twice includes the verb plus the particle את . In both Jer. l 34 and li 36, the verb and the noun of the same root are used to indicate that Yahweh will vigorously defend the cause of his people in exile against the Babylonians. Only in ii 29 is the construction similar to that which appears in xii l. In this case God asks the people: "Why do you argue your case to me?" (לָמָּה תָרִיבוּ אֵלָי).[29] Indeed, this should be the translation here rather than "Why do you bring charges against me?" (NIV), since there is no indication in the context that the people are angry with Yahweh. Rather they have abandoned him and rebelled against him, yet when they are in trouble (ii 27), they say, "Come and save us!" They bring their problems to God, but not their hearts. Thus Yahweh declares that they have no grounds for expecting him to respond on their behalf. This verse should not be read as the complaint of the people which corresponds to Yahweh's lawsuit of ii 9ff. The same grammatical construction apart from Jer. ii 29 and xii l, occurs only in Judg. xxi 22 and Job xxxiii l3. In Judg. xxi 22, the sense is again that of complaint. The Benjamites have seized wives from the girls of Shiloh and have taken them to their own territory. The fathers and brothers of the girls then come to complain to the elders of Israel, who in turn explain the actions of the Benjamites. Legal action would not have been appropriate against the elders, and the conversation is too cordial to

interpret in this manner. Finally, in Job xxxiii 13, Elihu chastises Job for his lack of perception concerning the ways of God. He wonders why Job has "complained" that God does not answer for any of his actions (מַדּוּעַ אֵלָיו רִיבוֹתָ כִּי כָל־ דְּבָרָיו לֹא־יַעֲנֶה). While it is possible to interpret this passage in terms of a legal action against God, the context suggests that Elihu understands Job to be questioning the ways of God rather than accusing him. Thus, Elihu attempts to explain God's actions (vss. 14-22). In each of these passages, the verb רִיב plus אֵל are used in a context where a complaint is registered to either God or someone else for actions which are not understood. The issues may be very laden with emotion, but the idea of strong legal accusation against the one addressed is not preeminent. The first phrases of Jer. xii 1 should be read as this kind of enquiry. God is righteous. Therefore, Jeremiah will plead his case before him, requesting that he make his ways more clear to this prophet trapped in the quandry of experience which does not support his theological understanding. The versions, as well as Rashi and Kimchi, support this view. In fact, both the LXX and Targ. gloss the phrase to avoid any implication that Jeremiah is accusing God of wrongdoing.

In the next phrase, Jeremiah specifically indicates his intent to raise an issue of justice with God. The construction (אַךְ מִשְׁפָּטִים אֲדַבֵּר אוֹתָךְ) is unique to Jeremiah.[30] In Jer. lii 9,[31] it is Nebuchadnezzar who speaks matters of justice with Zedekiah (וַיְדַבֵּר אִתּוֹ מִשְׁפָּטִים), although

later in Babylon Nebuchadnezzar speaks more favorably with Jehoiachin and the antonym construction is used (וַיְדַבֵּר אִתּוֹ טֹבוֹת --lii 32, cf. II Kings xxv 28). In Jer. iv 12 and i 16, the construction appears with God as the speaker. As in the other examples, matters of justice are being declared. In each of these cases, אוֹתָם is taken in the more common sense of "with them," which is customary with דבר in Jeremiah (cf. v 5; vii 22; ix 7; xxv 2; xxxviii 25), rather than "against them."[32] The emphasis is on God's just claims. These are not arbitrary judgments, but pronouncements originating in God's righteous character. In xii 1, it is Jeremiah who is speaking to Yahweh. Holladay, Berridge, and others read this as Jeremiah expressing bitter sarcasm, and they translate: "Yet I must pass judgment upon/against Thee."[33] But the sense of "giving a judgment against" is not necessarily implied in the construction as seen in the other passages in which it appears.[34] None of the ancient versions interprets the construction as a judgment against Yahweh. Rather, Jeremiah is about to raise a critical issue regarding God's justice to the one who alone is capable of responding to the question and is also responsible for the disposition of that justice.

In xii 1b, the question is asked: "Why does the way of wicked men prosper; all the treacherous men thrive?" (מַדּוּעַ דֶּרֶךְ רְשָׁעִים צְלְחָה שָׁלְוַ כָּל-בֹּגְדֵי בָגֹד). This was a crucial theological issue in an age permeated by the Deuteronomic formulations of blessings and curses which accompanied

obedience and rebellion respectively. And it was certainly a key issue for Jeremiah, whose prophetic vocation majored in the proclamation of doom as a result of covenant disobedience. The formulation of the question is not unlike other expressions of it in the OT (cf. Pss. xxxvii; xlix; lxxiii; Hab. i 2-4, 13; etc.). Rudolph (following Cornill, Volz, Peake, and others) suggests that Jeremiah was the first to raise the question, since in earlier times it was accepted that the innocent could suffer for the guilty (cf. Exod. xx 5). He emphasizes that the problem came with the advent of individual relgion.[35] But passages like Gen. xviii 22-33 and Ps. i argue that the theological principles on which the question was based were in place at a much earlier point. It is, indeed, and age-old question.[36] For Jeremiah, who took the justice of God and the concept of covenant seriously, it seemed critical to understand how people could perpetuate such wickedness as existed all around him with impunity. The response to this issue on the part of the those who maintained the prophetic orthodoxy of the age was that the promises of God with respect to the Temple and sacral kingship were paramount, superceding the concerns for personal responsibility in covenant obedience.

Textually the phrase is straightforward. Baumgartner has observed that while the question fits the content of the lament form, use of מדוע as the introductory interrogative rather than למה is not typical of the lament style.[37] The versions are somewhat paraphrastic in rendering the

question, but this is to be expected with a rather terse formulation.

The referent of "the wicked ones" in this passage is Judah as a whole, rather than the more limited body of Jeremiah's persecutors, as indicated by the language of vs. 2.[38] The first line reads נְטַעְתָּם גַּם-שָׁרָשׁוּ יֵלְכוּ גַּם-עָשׂוּ פֶּרִי ("you planted them and, yes, they took root; they grow and, yes, they produce fruit"). Rowley tries to supply an extra poetic beat, either by adding בארץ at the end of the first colon or by taking מדוע from the previous line to the beginning here. Neither suggestion is defensible or necessary. Of more substance is the suggestion that ילכו should somehow be emended. LXX has ἔτεκνοποίησαν which probably indicates a Hebrew reading יָלְדוּ (cf. also Old Latin), but this does not fit the imagery of the verse. Symmachus corrects to προκόπτοντες ("they thrive/ advance"). Rudolph (BHS) suggests יָלֹחוּ ("they are fresh/ vigorous"), but the emendation is quite unnecessary. Hos. xiv 7 utlizes similar agricultural imagery opening with the phrase יֵלְכוּ יֹנְקוֹתָיו ("they shall grow in his shade"). The motif is an old one, associated both with the giving of the land (cf. Ps. xliv 2-4) and with the Davidic covenant (cf. II Sam. vii 9, 10). It recalls the vineyard imagery of Isa. v. Furthermore, association has been drawn between this passage and Ps. i 3-4, which also seems to have a relationship to Jer. xvii 5-8. Considerable discussion has occurred as to the direction of dependency between these

passages, but whether Ps. i precedes Jer. xii 2 (which I believe to be the case) or draws upon it, does not alter the obvious meaning here.[39] This is a description of God's past and present activity in the lives of the people. He has planted them in the land and has caused them to be established and to be fruitful. He has thereby blessed them abundantly in the terms of the covenant, which promised this kind of fruitfulness (cf. Deut. xxviii 3ff.).

Nevertheless, the commitment of the people to God has been superficial. "You are near in their mouths, but far from their minds (lit.: 'kidneys' cf. xi 20a)" (קָרוֹב אַתָּה בְּפִיהֶם וְרָחוֹק מִכִּלְיוֹתֵיהֶם). The phrase is quite similar to Isa. xxix 13, which also deals with this kind of hypocrisy. For Jeremiah, it was the continuity of a person's thoughts and words which was honored by God (cf. Jer. xxix 12f.), but with these people only the words bespoke godliness. Undoubtedly the facade could fool some, but Jeremiah could not believe that it had fooled God.

In the opening line of vs. 3, Jeremiah forcefully rejects the notion that God has somehow been duped by empty words. He knows in his own experience that God has carefully tested his whole being and not just his words. "But you, Lord, know me and see me; you examine my heart toward you" (וְאַתָּה יהוה יָדַעְתָּנִי תִּרְאֵנִי וּבָחַנְתָּ לִבִּי אִתָּךְ). LXX does not reflect the verb תראני , and although the MT is supported by the other ancient versions, the poetic evenness of the verse is certainly improved by the omission. The

occurrence here may be an early influence of xx 12 on this verse. In either case the meaning is the same. Jeremiah understands that God's knowledge of him is thorough. The verb יצר implies a deep, intimate relationship. As in the related expressions in xi 20 and xx 12, the verb בחן suggests a careful scrutiny. Even as God has caused the prophet to "assay" the fundamental material of the people's lives (vi 27f.), so God has assayed his life as well.

Vs. 3a serves both to reject the possibility that the wickedness of the people has somehow gone unnoticed behind their pretense and to establish the innocence of the prophet. In putting himself in the spotlight, Jeremiah acknowledges that his enquiry represents more than a passing interest in a theological issue. His understanding of the meaning and mystery of his own vocation is at stake. The message which has come to him as God's word has been based on the supposition that thoroughgoing, heart obedience is the essential element in relating to God and, thereby, in receiving his blessing. It was because of the rebellion of the people that Jeremiah was confident that disaster would come upon them. But without the advent of the disaster, his theological construct lacked credibility and was easily eclipsed by the theology of the Temple and sacral kingship with its clear emphasis on the promise of peace rather than on the requirements of God.

There is no evidence here that Jeremiah perceived any greater, divine purpose in the circumstances. Neither his

own suffering nor that of the people made sense to him in light of the apparently inviolable condition of the wicked. His only suggestion is that God's tolerance should come to an end. Vs. 3b is a call to destruction: "Separate them out like sheep to the slaughter; set them apart for the day of slaughter" (הַתִּקֵם כְּצֹאן לְטִבְחָה וְהַקְדִּשֵׁם לְיוֹם הֲרֵגָה). The first colon is lacking in the LXX, although it appears in 4QJer^{a} from Qumran and the other ancient versions. Furthermore, the poetry of the line supports its inclusion. The imagery is similar to that in xi 19 where it is used to describe the plot against the prophet. Here it is applied to all of the wicked. This is not a cry of personal animosity against Jeremiah's emenies alone, but rather the plea for the righteous judgment of God to fall. The first verb is taken by both Rashi and Kimchi to indicate that those who are evil are "drawn apart" from their place of security to destruction, according to the model of Josh. viii 6. This is a slightly different meaning than the Vulg. ("gather them together"--congrega eos) or Pesh. ("prepare them"--). but it fits well with the imagery. The second verb in the MT indicates that they are to be marked for slaughter. The LXX and Vulg., drawing upon the cultic use of קדשׁ [P], suggest a more sacramental process ("purify them"-- ἁγνισον αὐτοὺς ; "sanctify them"-- sanctifica eos), while the Targ. and Pesh. render the verb more generally ("ready them"-- וְזַמִּינִינוּן ; "invite/ready them"--). Rashi and Kimchi both say that it

simply means "to summon them" (הזמינם). Kimchi goes on to describe the "day of slaughter" as "a day of destruction . . . and devastation." What Jeremiah has in mind is probably very similar to the great judgment of the יום יהוה ("Day of Yahweh") elsewhere in the prophets.[40] Jeremiah is asking for the judgment to come upon all his adversaries, who are also the adversaries of God.

While most scholars view vs. 4 as an authentic utterance of Jeremiah, they do not see it as original here, since it is somewhat difficult to connect with the argument.[41] Certainly, the verse may have originally come from another context, but the textual evidence suggests that it was associated with this passage from an early time and that its interpretation was problematic from the start. The verse is in the form of another lamenting question: "How long will the land mourn and the green grass of every field wither because of the wickedness of those who dwell in it?" In this present context, the verse contrasts with the wicked who prosper and bear fruit (vs. 1b, 2). The land, which is itself innocent, sustains the consequence of the wickedness of the people through the effects of the drought, which were considered a natural result of covenant disobedience (cf. iii 3; iv 27-28; v 24-25; xiv 2-6; xxiii 10; Hos. iv 2-3; Isa. xxiv 4-6; xxxiii 8-9; Gen. iii 17-19; Deut. xxviii 15-20; xxix 18-28). The prophet extends his question by asking how it is that the innocent land can go on suffering, while the wicked, whose actions have brought about this

decay, dwell in relative security. The transition to this verse may not be a smooth one, but the question is certainly appropriate here. It is the same problem of justice which is in view. If the wicked were directly punished, then the innocent would not have to bear the curse. The picture of natural disaster is summarized in the phrase "vanished are the animals and birds" (סָפְתָה בְהֵמוֹת וָעוֹף).[42] Rashi reads this phrase as the Holy Spirit's answer to the prophet's question. Kimchi sees the verse as moving from the general expression of devastation ("the land mourns") to the specific details involving both flora and fauna.

The final line has often been retained even by those who have omitted the rest of the verse, although it is more difficult to interpret, as witnessed by the ancient versions. The primary problem is in determining the antecedents for the pronouns. The third person plural in the introductory verb undoubtedly refers to "the wicked." This is made explicit by the gloss to that effect in the Pesh. But the quotation is far less clear. The MT reads לֹא יִרְאֶה אֶת-אַחֲרִיתֵנוּ ("he will not see our end"). If God is taken as the subject, the statement becomes one of indifference toward God, i.e. "God will not see our end." Indeed, the LXX appears to gloss the text to make this interpretation clear: οὐκ ὄψεται ὁ θεὸς ὁδοὺς ἡμῶν ("God will not see our ways"). There is some suggestion from the text of 4QJer^{a} that LXX may have had an alternative Vorlage, since the incomplete text reads]יהוה יראֶה . The כ is indistinct and is

perhaps an erasure. The two letters just before the textual break perhaps indicate a subject lost in the MT. Unfortunately, the evidence is deficient. LXX is reading אָרְחוֹתֵינוּ , rather than אַחֲרִיתֵנוּ , for the last word of the line, but the Hebrew makes good sense and need not be emended.[43] Kimchi also holds this interpretation. He reads the statement as the reply of the wicked to the prophet's message of future doom. God sees neither their deeds nor their future. It is a statement of "practical atheism" (cf. v 12-14; Ps. xiv 1; Zeph. i 12).[44] The Pesh. moves in a different direction by rendering the phrase "we shall not see an end." It is a simple statement of defiance and disbelief on the part of the people. However, this is a straightforward gloss without support. The Targ., on the other hand, seems to view the phrase as an expression of disdain directed toward the prophet: לָא גְלֵי קֳדָמוֹהִי סוֹפֶנָא ("he will not reveal our end before him"). The sense is that God has not revealed the plight of the people to the prophet and, therefore, Jeremiah can be ignored. Rashi follows this interpretation by glossing the text with "he [the prophet] has no revelation before him about what our end will be." Of the ancient versions, only the Vulg. renders the phrase directly without attempting to clarify the ambiguity of the Hebrew. Graf supports Jeremiah as the subject rather than God by demonstrating that רָאָה never has the sense of seeing that which is future when God is the subject.[45] It is quite possible to make good sense out of

the passage if Jeremiah is taken as the subject. One option is that Jeremiah will not see their end, because his enemies will put an end to him first.[46] In this case, the quotation relates directly to what precedes it, since Jeremiah will also vanish like the innocent wildlife. Thus the prophet is saying, "Will the wicked continue to thrive even when the innocent land and the faithful among the people (including myself) have seen our demise?" A more direct interpretation, however, is to read the statement as the wicked saying that Jeremiah will not see their end because his threatenings will not come to pass. It is a simple case of ridicule. It is my judgment that the statement should be read in this last sense. Jeremiah concludes his query concerning the justice of God with a personal note. He has proclaimed doom for the people. The drought is a concrete indication of judgment. Yet the wicked have not repented, nor has God as yet fulfilled his word concerning their final devastation. It is because the prophet has spoken words of doom, which have not yet materialized, that Jeremiah assumes that the people only mock him and will not heed his warnings. Standing as an isolated voice against the age has already caused the prophet great suffering. Only the fact that the prophecy would come true (cf. Deut. xviii 21-22) could bring vindication. But as long as the wicked prospered, there would be no vindication and both the prophet and the God whom he served would look like fools.

Verses 5 and 6 serve as Yahweh's response to the

prophet.[47] Rather than the expected word of assurance following a lament, the prophet is told that he is the one with the problem and that his circumstances will get much worse before he sees the justice of God.

Vs. 5 consists of two comparisons. In the first, God asks the prophet, "If you have run with men on foot, and they have tired you, how will you compete against horses?" (כִּי אֶת-רַגְלִים רַצָּתָה וַיַּלְאוּךָ וְאֵיךְ תְּתַחֲרֶה אֶת- הַסּוּסִים). The use of the verb [רוץ], both here and in reference to the cult prophets in Jer. xxiii 21, is a possible indication that it is the false prophets who are in view here.[48] If the image of "horses" refers to military might (cf. iv 13; viii 16), then Yahweh is saying, "If you grow weary in your competition with the false prophets who are a part of your own people, how will you ever survive when the enemy comes with full military might against the land." Jeremiah is not to be exempt from the agony of the catastrophe which will come. This type of direct correspondence of the imagery is, of course, not necessary for the meaning of the verse. The point is, that whatever his circumstances now, the prophet should expect them to get much worse.[49] Kimchi, quoting his father, suggests a slightly different interpretation, which attempts a more direct answer to the question posed to God by the prophet. He says that if Jeremiah's townsmen had conspired against him and the prophet could not read their minds to understand what they were doing, how could he expect to discern the purposes of God? Kimchi here follows

the highly paraphrastic and midrashic attempt by the Targ., which goes to great length to illustrate that God's wisdom cannot be understood by man. The Targ. must be viewed as too midrashic to be truly helpful with the biblical text in this instance.

The second comparison is similar, although the text is somewhat more difficult to understand. In the MT it reads: וּבְאֶרֶץ שָׁלוֹם אַתָּה בוֹטֵחַ וְאֵיךְ תַּעֲשֶׂה בִּגְאוֹן הַיַּרְדֵּן ("And if in a peaceful land you are trusting/complacent, how will you do in the thicket of the Jordan?"). Many commentators have questioned the meaning of the word בוטח , pointing out that the comparison is not immediately transparent. Several suggestions have been made to clarify, including emending the text to ברח ("fleeing"),[50] associating the verb with the Arabic baṭaḥa ("I lay with the face downwards"),[51] or simply reading as a little known Hebrew root meaning "to fall down" (cf. Prov. xiv 16).[52] The LXX reads πέποιθας ("trust"); the Vulg. reads securis fueris ("you have been secure"); and the Pesh. reads ܒܛܚ ("you have confidence"). Each of these accurately render the MT. Although the MT is somewhat difficult to interpret, no emendation is necessary. בוֹטֵחַ should be understood as "feeling secure/at ease" (cf. Amos vi 1). The meaning is that one who has grown accustomed to the relative security of a peaceful land will not fare well in a dangerous area. It is precisely the danger which is indicated by the designation בִּגְאוֹן הַיַּרְדֵּן . LXX translates the phrase very

literally with φρυαγμάτι τοῦ Ἰορδάνου ("arrogance of the Jordan"). Because the identical phrase is used in Zech. xi 3, it is highly likely that the translators understood this as a specific geographical designation. Jer. xlix 19 and l 44 clarify the element of danger connected with this region. The "thicket" or "jungle" which surrounded the Jordan was the habitat of lions, and even as these lions could come suddenly out to threaten the strongest sheepfold, so God could unexpectedly bring a terror upon his people against whom no one could stand. Kimchi associates the phrase with "a place where the waves of the Jordan are tossing high," but the reference is still one of great danger.[53] It is the fact that the danger can come suddenly which is important in the use of this image. The prophet must be constantly on guard, which is unlikely if he has grown accustomed to dwelling securely.

Yahweh is reminding Jeremiah in this verse that difficulties and dangers will abound for the prophet. He should not expect that either his vocational responsibilities (alluded to in the first comparison by the "running" imagery) or the response to his proclamation (there are those who are waiting to "pounce" upon him like a lion) will be easy. At times he will not be able to understand God's ways or God's timing. He will experience the personal persecution of people and he will undergo the judgment which their activities have effected. Jeremiah's expressions of confusion and dismay are answered not with comfort, but with

an indication that he should expect more of these difficulties as he continues to carry out his call. As in the case of the other self-disclosures, this material is included by the prophet primarily because it demonstrates a divergent understanding of the prophetic vocation from that which was a part of the prophetic orthodoxy of his day.

Verse 6, as I have previously suggested, may be a later attempt to define the general danger alluded to in vs. 5. Certainly, the introduction of the verse by כִּי suggests that it is intended to be a continuous thought with vs. 5. Skinner omits the verse as a mistaken commentary.[54] Rather, the verse should be read as two specific examples of the threats indicated in vs. 5, without limiting the reference of this previous verse to these circumstances.

The first surprising event mentioned is that Jeremiah's brother's and his own kin have dealt faithlessly with him (כִּי גַם-אַחֶיךָ וּבֵית-אָבִיךָ גַּם-הֵמָּה בָּגְדוּ בָךְ). בגד may be utilized here to create affinities with xii 1 where the word is prominent. The LXX and Pesh. focus on the "treachery" which is involved (cf. LXX ἠθέτησάν which is also utilized in xii 1), while the Vulg. indicates that they "fought" (pugnaverunt) against him. Kimchi explains that "they intended to feed him deadly poison," an idea gleened from the Targ. of xi 19, but the form of treachery is not mentioned.

The second event is described in the MT as גַּם-הֵמָּה קָרְאוּ אַחֲרֶיךָ מָלֵא , a colon which is not as clear as the

parallel colon which precedes it. The LXX renders the phrase as two separate clauses: "And they have cried out, from behind you they have gathered together [in pursuit]" (καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐβόησαν, ἐκ τῶν ὀπίσω σου ἐπισυνήχθησαν). The LXX is probably interpreting the same Hebrew text, although this is the only time in the OT (in 32 appearances) where ἐπισυναγω is used to translate מָלֵא . The Targ. glosses the line with "even they speak to you full of hate" (אַף אִינוּן אֲמַרוּ עֲלָךְ מְלִין בִּשְׁנָן), and the Pesh. must mean something like "they have even gossipped about you" (وهم ايضا تحدثوا عليك). Rashi and Kimchi both think that מלא means "a group" which has gathered behind the prophet to frighten him. More reasonable is the suggestion that מלא should be understood as "loudly" (cf. BDB), as is the case in Jer. iv 5. Bright translates: "Even they are in full cry behind you."[55] This is the way that it is also rendered by the Vulg.: "they have cried after you with full voice" (clamaverunt post te plena voce). Not only have Jeremiah's kinsmen dealt faithlessly with him, but they have also yelled at him, either mockery, abuse, or threats.

In the final line, Jeremiah is warned that he should take these events to heart and not be deceived when they speak to him in a friendly manner (אַל-תַּאֲמֵן בָּם כִּי יְדַבְּרוּ אֵלֶיךָ טוֹבוֹת --"Do not believe them even though they speak good things to you"). His kinsmen, like the rest of the land, are not to be trusted. They will not only ignore his words, but they will continue to persecute him.

The description which is given in vs. 6 of the persecution (presumably from those in Anathoth) is somewhat different from that in xi 19. There is no indication that the plot which is revealed to Jeremiah in xi 19 was shouted as a threat at him. Rather it seems to be somewhat surreptitious. The descriptions seem to be of separate instances. While this verse should be read in relation to the earlier passage, there is no strong indication that it belongs there textually. Rather this is an isolated verse, which draws upon the antagonism expressed by those who should have supported the prophet to illustrate the hardship which awaits him.

Jeremiah xv 10, 11

These verses stand in the immediate context of a great crisis in the prophet's faith. In xv 15-18, Jeremiah complains that God has treated him very unfairly. He has been persecuted, insulted, isolated, and filled with indignation--all for the sake of God's call to him. He has fulfilled what he believes to be his vocation by joyfully receiving God's word and by becoming identified with God himself. Yet despite the fact that the prophet feels that he has acted obediently, God has seemingly proved unfaithful. While these verses appear to have Jeremiah's personal suffering explicitly in view, they stand against the wider historic background of God's apparent failure to carry out the plan against Judah which Jeremiah had been

commanded to proclaim. Jeremiah's reputation as a prophet was at stake. And, more importantly, God's own reputation was at stake, at least in Jeremiah's eyes.

Jeremiah's complaint and accusation (xv 15-18) forms the central core of the passage. The verses which follow (vss. 19-21) are God's response as he corrects, affirms, and reiterates his commission to the prophet. Vss. 12-14, which immediately precede, are undoubtedly an intrusion. There is no contextual support for their appearance here. LXX attempts to solve the problem of incongruity by reading חֵילָךְ in vs. 13 as part of vs. 12 and giving a conditional interpretation.[56] As might be expected, Aquila and Symmachus read much like the MT, while Theodotion (according to Jerome) follows the LXX. The problem does not seem to rest with a corrupted text, but rather with a misplaced one. Bright is probably correct (see also Rudolph in BHS) in treating these verses as a damaged variant of Jer. xvii 1-4.[57] Janzen suggests that "this doublet may have arisen like many other doublets in Jeremiah as a scholarly marginal cross-reference."[58] He further suggests that since Jer. xv 11ff. would have stood in the adjacent column to xvii 1-4 in an ancient manuscript, the material that is now xv 12-14 may have originally been a marginal variant or a "correction of haplography in the common archetype of 17.1-4." It would have slipped into chapter xv quite by accident. This is a creative suggestion, but it cannot be assessed beyond the realm of speculation. If verses 12-14 are omitted, however,

vss. 10 and 11 stand in the context of the "core" material (as described above) with which they are compatible.

The entire pericope (xv 10,11,15-21) follows two other sections in chapter xv. The first (vss. 1-4) is largely a prose section (with the exception of vs. 2b), which is God's response to the corporate pleadings of the people at the end of chapt. xiv. God rejects their plea saying that not even the intercession of Moses or Samuel, for whom he had relented in the past, could help. A destiny of doom is assured. The second section (vss. 5-9) is a poetic lament and judgment oracle against Jerusalem, and may be seen as following the prose material logically. Indeed, vs. 4, specifically naming Manasseh as the cause of God's irreversible wrath, closes with a reference to Jerusalem, which is immediately picked up in vs. 5a. God's imminent destruction of Jerusalem with all of her inhabitants is vividly and dramatically described.

This then is the context of vss. 10, 11. One can only guess as to why they were so placed. It is possible that the reference in vs. 10 to "my mother" in a statement of personal lament was thought to have affinities with the references to mothers in the preceding verses. Furthermore, it is possible to understand a prophet's great anguish at having to deliver such a message of complete doom. This may well have given rise to a cry of personal lament of the type exhibited in the first half of verse 10. Certainly, Jeremiah did not enjoy his task and the consequent identity

of being a "man of strife and a man of contention to all the land."

But if these are the characteristics which helped to fix the position of vss. 10 and 11 (and perhaps the rest of the passage which follows), then the latter half of vs. 10 reads as jarringly inappropriate. The issue of money lending has not been raised heretofore. If there is to be a contextual reason why everyone is cursing Jeremiah, it should be found in the nature of the oracles which he delivers and not in his financial affairs. Either we must declare the arrangement of the materials in this part of the book to be very thematically heterogeneous and, hence, only requiring the barest of threads to bind them together, or something must be made of this line about money lending that renders it more consistent with its context. Let us examine the terminology of verse 10.

אִישׁ רִיב is a phrase which appears elsewhere in the OT with the sense of "adversary." In Job xxxi 35 (in the conclusion of Job's summary arguments concerning his cause), Job requests that "my adversary (אִישׁ רִיב) write an indictment (סֵפֶר)," as he demands that the Almighty answer his charges. Here, God is the referent of אִישׁ רִיב , and it is clearly a legal title connected with an accusation. II Sam. xv 2, 4 offer a similar parallel, though here the phrase appears as a full verbal clause. Absalom, in trying to generate support for himself over against his father,

King David, suggests that "any man who has a case" (כָּל-הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר-יִהְיֶה-לוֹ-רִיב) for the king should come to see him for satisfaction. In Isa. xli 11, the plural form of the phrase is employed, again with the sense of adversary: "And your adversaries will perish" (וְיֹאבְדוּ אַנְשֵׁי רִיבֶךָ). Here the sense of legal adversary is obscured. This is simply enemies who would shame and disgrace Israel as they vented their anger against her.[59] Judg. xii 2 contains the phrase in the context of Jephthah's defense of his own actions before the Ephriamites. Again there is a military adversary sense, though the verse is somewhat difficult to translate: אִישׁ רִיב הָיִיתִי אֲנִי וְעַמִּי וּבְנֵי-עַמּוֹן מְאֹד וָאֶוָּעֵק אֶתְכֶם.[60] In all of these occurrences the phrase is descriptive of one who takes the offensive as the adversary, either in a legal claim against someone else or in a battle. The parallel term, אִישׁ מָדוֹן , appears to be similar in meaning. The identical phrase occurs only in the Kᵉrê of II Sam. xxi 20 (Kᵉtîb = אִישׁ מִדִּין), though it is likely that this text should be emended on the basis of the Targ. and the parallel passage in Chronicles to read אִישׁ מִדָּה . The phrase in the plural appears in Prov. xxvi 21 (אִישׁ מְדוֹנִים ; Kᵉrê מְדָנִים) where it refers to one who "stokes the flames of dissension. . . . [He] adds fuel to the flames of controversy at every opportunity and is a professional saboteur of human relationships."[61] The word appears in one form the other nineteen times in Proverbs.[62] While it can refer to strife or dissension of a variety of types (e.g. drunken squab-

bles--xxiii 29; nagging wives--xix 13, xxi 9, 19; etc.), it is often seen in the context of legal disputes (as the root דין would suggest).[63] In Prov. xv 18 and xvii 14, it appears coupled with ריב with issues of litigation in view.[64] In Hab. i 3, מדון and ריב again appear together (וַיְהִי רִיב וּמָדוֹן יִשָּׂא) with legal implications. It seems to be entirely fitting that Jeremiah should be described as a "legal adversary" and "man of disputation," since one of his tasks was to announce Yahweh's legal action against his people. LXX translates the phrases specifically as descriptive of one involved in legal action (using the middle participial forms of δικάζω and διακρίνω [65]). The LXX has the sense of a man who makes legal accusations and decides disputes. Likewise, the Targ. and Pesh. reflect legal terminology (Pesh.: "judge").

The verb נשׁא [Q] or נשׁה is always used of the legal relationship established when money is loaned. Many legal actions in Israel were brought about because of the problems of indebtedness.[66] Usury (exacting unfair interest on money loaned) was roundly condemned (cf. Deut. xxiv 11; Exod. xxii 24; Ps. cix 11; Neh. v 7ff.). Here Jeremiah protests that he has never entered any relationship on the basis of a loan; he has not lent and no one has lent to him. It is possible that the practice of usury stands in the background here, but it is not necessary to make that assumption. The picture is of a simple type of transaction of which Jeremiah has never been a part.

While this declaration of innocence does not seem consistent superficially with the wider context of vss. 10 and 11, it may be viewed as quite consistent with the first line of the verse which describes Jeremiah as one involved in litigation. This phrase suggests that at least one common cause of dispute (namely that of money lending) is not true of the prophet. He is not a man of strife and dispute for any material reason. Thus, these phrases should be read together, possibly as follows: ". . . a man of litigation and disputation to all the land, though I have not lent and they have not lent to me" (cf. Rashi).

The final phrase (MT: כֻּלֹּה מְקַלְלוּנִי) is then to be read independently as a summary statement of lament, corresponding with the first phrase of the verse.[67] There are, of course, several textual problems in this last phrase. The root קלל [P] presents no problem but the form is anomalous. If it is to be read as a participle (with mêm preformative) with the first person pronominal suffix, one would expect מְקַלְלִי . However, an active sense seems to be the intention of the phrase. Therefore, it seems more likely that the verb should be read קִלְלוּנִי (as a third person plural perfect with a first person singular pronominal suffix). The mêm may easily be appended to the early form כלה (see Siloam inscription) to form a more regular כֻּלָּם.[68]

Verse 10 now stands as a statement of individual lament. It does not seem to follow necessarily from what

precedes it (though it does have a certain logical attachment). It does reflect the prophet's consternation once again with his vocation. The opening, rhetorical reproach against his own birth, underlines Jeremiah's conviction that his vocation has been given him as a fact of life (cf. i 5) rather than a matter of decision. He is, indeed, a man with a legal case, but it is not a civil affair for which he might expect harsh treatment. His case has a divine origin (vs. 15). Yet he is cursed.

In verse 11, the prophet continues the positive description of his vocation, here focusing on the aspect of intercession. I have dealt with the verse in detail in a previous chapter, so in this context I shall only summarize that analysis. On the basis of the LXX and other exegetical considerations, I have emended the first word to אֶפְגַּע . The verse is therefore in the form of a forceful declaration of Jeremiah's faithfulness to the prophetic role of intercession. He asserts that he has interceded to God for the enemy in a time of anguish. The text is not clear as to whether the distress belongs to the prophet or to the enemy. The LXX supplies the possessive pronoun interpreting that Jeremiah has interceded on behalf of the people for good things during the time of their affliction. Indeed, this is probably correct. They have cursed him as a contentious man at the very time that he has continued to intercede on their behalf because of the evil which is rampant in their midst and the resultant devastation which is to come. He has both

preached and prayed only for their good. Furthermore, as an intercessor, he had fulfilled a traditional role of his prophetic office, even after he was forbidden by God to intercede.

Thus, in vss. 10 and 11 Jeremiah offers a review and defense of two aspects of his vocation. First, he says that he is cursed by everyone because of his proclamation of God's lawsuit against the people. He has gained the reputation of one who brings naught but strife, although he has assumed that the "word of the Lord" should be received with some of the same openness with which he has received it. Second, he affirms that he has carried out his service to God on behalf of his people faithfully. He has interceded for their peace. In both cases, he has exercised his office appropriately.

Jeremiah xv 15-21

Vss. 15-18 follow naturally the lamenting tone of Jeremiah's comments in vss. 10, 11, while vss. 19-21 form Yahweh's reply to this entire discourse. The Gattung of individual lament is evident in this passage, although the various elements of the structure are intertwined rather than following a precise succession. Furthermore, the verses are full of emotional content and personal reference, along with juridical elements, which supplement the structure and indicate that Jeremiah has employed the form loosely for his own special purposes.

Vs. 15 in the MT begins with a terse statement affirming God's awareness of the prophet's plight, which can be paraphrastically translated, "Ah, you are fully aware!" (אַתָּה יָדַעְתָּ). The pronoun appears in the emphatic position. LXX omits the phrase altogether, but it is included in the other ancient versions. Gerstenberger holds that it was inserted after the LXX was made, Jer. xvii 16 and xii 3 being the prototypes for this amendment.[69] Because of the disturbed text which precedes it, Bright transposes the phrase at the end of vs. 11, although it is difficult to understand why the intrusion of vss. 12-14 came before these words if they so obviously read better with vs. 11.[70] There is no valid contextual reason to doubt their authenticity here.[71] In fact, the statement is quite congruent with the next cola in which Jeremiah calls Yahweh, whom he knows is fully aware, to remember and to visit the prophet and to take revenge on his persecutors.

. The idea of "remembering" (זָכְרֵנִי --"remember me") goes beyond mere recollection. The prophet calls God to rehearse the past in such a way that it leads to action in the present. Similarly, וּפָקְדֵנִי ("visit me/ seek me out/ take note of me"; cf. LXX) is meant to suggest a visitation which entails action. The particular response which Jeremiah has in mind is vengeance against his persecutors (וְהִנָּקֶם לִי מֵרֹדְפַי --"take revenge for me on my persecutors"; cf. Jer. xi 20; xx 12). This is not a personal vendetta, but a request for the righteous judgment of God to fall upon those who have

opposed the prophet as God's representative. Because it is Yahweh who has called Jeremiah, given him the words to speak, and designated to whom the proclamations should be made, it is Yahweh whose honor is at stake as much as the prophet's. This is basically a requisition that God be consistent with what Jeremiah assumes are his character and purposes. The entire line has the tenor of a request for official action.

In the next colon, Jeremiah deals with the one characteristic of God which he knows can militate against his entreaty. The MT reads: אַל-לְאֶרֶךְ אַפְּךָ תִּקָּחֵנִי ("do not destroy me because of your patience"). It is a difficult phrase. The verb should undoubtedly be read from the root לקח [Q] which literally would mean "take me away." The verb is awkward in this setting, but must mean "destroy." Others have emended the text to read a root נקע [Q] with a meaning "turn away/ 'lie down on the job'" (cf. Ezek. xxiii 22, 28).[72] This is convenient but not convincing. Of the ancient versions, only the Pesh. reflects the Hebrew accurately. LXX omits this verb altogether, rendering the remainder of the colon as "do not be patient with them" (μὴ εἰς μακροθυμίαν). There is no further evidence, however, for omission. The Targ. paraphrases the colon which gives us little textual help. The Vulg. reads noli in patientia tua suscipere me ("in your patience do not acknowledge me/defend me"), which does not make good sense of the passage. Gerstenberger, without any textual support,

attempts to ease the awkwardness by eliminating לארך as a corrupted dittography of באפך or לאפך . Thus the original text would read "Do not, in your anger, take me away" (cf. Ps. vi 2; xxvii 9; xxxviii 2).[73] But there is no other indication that Yahweh is angry with the prophet at this point. Berridge seems closest to the text itself in suggesting that Jeremiah is here appealing to one of the Divine predications found in Exod. xxxiv 6, 7. Yahweh is indeed "longsuffering." But Jeremiah "fears that precisely this attribute, if exercised over against his enemies, will result in his own destruction."[74] (See Rashi and Kimchi for a much earlier expression of this same interpretation).

In the final colon of vs. 15, the prophet asks God to take one more fact into account, namely that he has suffered abuse on Yahweh's behalf (דַּע שָׂאתִי עָלֶיךָ חֶרְפָּה --"Consider that I bore reproach for you"). This phrase is still another indication that the primary reality which the prophet has in view with regard to his suffering is his vocation. The words bear testimony to the bond which he has with God as the messenger who has been entrusted with Divine oracles. The scorn which he faces is no less than scorn against God himself.

In vs. 16, Jeremiah continues his case by arguing his motive of innocence. He has joyfully and obediently cooperated with God in every way. When God's words came, he "ate them," an expression which focuses on the prophet's willing response rather than the manner of receipt. (For a

detailed analysis, see chapters below.) Furthermore, there is a significant joy to be experienced in connection with the prophetic vocation, even in the midst of suffering. Jeremiah chooses words carefully in this verse and the next to highlight the tension between the loneliness, which is his because of the denial of certain normal expressions of sociableness due to his vocation (vs. 17), and the joy, which is also a part of his reality (vs. 16b). (See below.)

The tension is further sharpened in the final line of vs. 16 by the use of imagery connected with what was thought to be God's guarantee of permanence and support. When Jeremiah says כִּי-נִקְרָא שִׁמְךָ עָלָי (lit.: "for your name was called upon me"), he expresses the stability which Judah understood in her relationship with God as illustrated in Jer. xiv 9: וְאַתָּה בְקִרְבֵּנוּ יהוה וְשִׁמְךָ עָלֵינוּ נִקְרָא ("And you are among us, O Yahweh, and we bear your name;" lit.: "your name is called over us").[75] Similarly, in two prose passages of Jeremiah, the phrase also expresses the idea that there is safety wherever God has placed his name. In Jer. vii 10, even those who do detestable things come and stand before Yahweh in the Temple, which bears God's name (אֲשֶׁר נִקְרָא-שְׁמִי עָלָיו), and say, "We are safe . . ." And in Jer. xxv 19, God counters the people's sense of security, which they have because they dwell "in the city which bears my name" (בָּעִיר אֲשֶׁר נִקְרָא-שְׁמִי עָלֶיהָ).[76] Thus, the reception of God's words initially gave Jeremiah the same confidence that the people had because of the Temple, or Jerusalem, or

their position as God's chosen people. His complaint in this passage is not due primarily to his social isolation or even the scorn which he has to bear, because the joy and security of his vocational role superceded all of that, at least initially. Rather, Jeremiah's complaint is that the stability, which he had experienced and assumed was permanent, now seems to be crumbling, just like the social institutions on which the people had relied. His pain (vs. 18), that is the tension which he experienced within the bounds of his prophetic office, was threatening even his deepest sense of security, and Yahweh, who alone was the source of his security, seemed to have vanished. Jeremiah, therefore, felt much like the people who would no longer be able to experience "joy and gladness" or enjoy the absolute promise that they would bear God's name forever.

The social isolation and loneliness which the prophet encountered in his vocation is highlighted in vs. 17. Jer. xvi 1-9 supplies extended prose material,[77] which expands the theme of xv 17, but the specific reference to the "company of merrymakers" remains uncertain. Hubmann suggests that it refers to the Heilspropheten, and, accordingly, the confessions are seen in the context of Jeremiah's confrontation with the false prophets.[78] It is an interesting idea, but the text seems far more general. Jeremiah is simply pointing out that the normal social interaction which should have been his within his culture was denied him within his particular call. He could not

rejoice with any who had immediate cause for rejoicing, because he could see that God had ultimately taken away all that sustained social stability (xvi 3-9). Furthermore, the very fact that he saw what others refused to see, and proclaimed the oracles of judgment עיר ; cf. vi 11 and see analysis in chapter below), meant that he was rejected and forced to sit alone. Certainly he was not honored like many of those who upheld the prophetic orthodoxy of the late 7th century or like the memories of the prophets who preceded him. One of the greatest agonies that can overtake a man is that he be alone (cf. Ps. cii 6-11).

Verse 18 is the climax of Jeremiah's "case" against God. "Why," he asks, "if you are in control of my life and vocation, has my pain been endless?" And he ends his argument with the accusation that God has been unreliable. What follows, in verses 19-21, is God's rebuke and a sort of recommissioning similar to the call narrative of chapter i.

It is in the language of suffering in vs. 18 where the intensity of Jeremiah's expression is at its peak. How does he describe his problem? The first phrase which is employed is כְּאֵבִי נֶצַח ("my pain/anguish is endless"). כאב is a common Semitic root appearing numerous times in BH in a verbal form or as the noun מכאוב .[79] As the noun form seen here, however, there are only six occurrences. In two cases the reference seems to be to an emotionally related affliction. For example, Isaiah lxv 14 uses it to indicate the opposite of internal well-being and somewhat equivalent

to "a broken spirit": "And, behold, servants shall shout joyfully from well-being of heart (מִטּוּב לֵב cf. Deut. xxviii 47), but you (i.e. those who forsake, cf. verse 11) shall cry out from a pain of heart (מִכְּאֵב לֵב) and you shall wail from a broken spirit (מִשֶּׁבֶר רוּחַ)." The context seems to imply a kind of anguish rather than physical pain. This is also true of Psalm xxxix 3, where the Psalmist tried at first to restrain from speaking his accusation against God when "the wicked" were in his presence. But as he was silent, he says, "My pain was stirred up (וּכְאֵבִי נֶעְכָּר) and my heart was hot within me (verse 4a)." עכר (N) is a rather unusual verb, though the root seems to indicate a "troubling" or "stirring up" (cf. Prov. xv 6; I Kings xviii 17f.) and the image here seems to be the effect which is caused when ash-covered burning coals are stirred up and the fire waxes hot. The "pain" thus referred to is not an uncontrolable physical pain, but one which can be "fanned" and heightened by psychological means. But כְּאֵב also appears twice in Job (ii 13 and xvi 6) where the reference is definitely physical affliction (boils, etc., cf. ii 7, 8) and in Isaiah xvii 11 where כְּאֵב is parallel with נַחֲלָה (= נְחָלָה) and refers to a crop which grew well at first but reaped only a sickly harvest.[80]

An evaluation of כאב in its verbal forms (either Qal or Hiphil) demonstrates this same broad application. The word may be applied both to specifically physical (cf. Gen.

xxxiv 25; Ps. lxix 30; Ezek. xxviii 24) and to emotional/ mental pain (cf. Prov. xiv 13; Ezek. xiii 22). Similarly, מַכְאֹב appears in both contexts.[81]

From even this initial excursus into the lexicographical background of this first word denoting suffering, it must be observed that there is a great fluidity within BH which is found in the entire vocabulary of suffering.[82] As I have already mentioned, the Hebrew was not overly concerned to make a careful delineation between pain that affected the body from that which affected the mind or emotion. Rather the distinction is made between the condition of חֳלִי and that of suffering, no matter what the source or the effect on the person. A person is either in חֳלִי or he is somehow in pain, anguish, brokenness, etc., and, therefore, in need of healing.[83]

Whether the pain which Jeremiah felt was physical, mental, emotional, or all three, the emphasis of his description is upon its enduring character. It is נֶצַח ("endless, perpetual"). It persists through time and will not be assuaged.

This same emphasis is reiterated in the parallel phrase which follows. Here Jeremiah's suffering is described as "my incurable wound" (וּמַכָּתִי אֲנוּשָׁה). Again, the exact meaning of מכה as it appears in BH is ambiguous. In Deut. xxviii 59, 61 it is part of the punishment which would be inflicted by God for covenant disobedience. Its parallel with חלי and מדוה suggests the idea of a plague or chronic

illness, especially as it appears with the adjectives: מַכּוֹת גְּדֹלוֹת וְנֶאֱמָנוֹת ("great and lasting plagues"). A similar parallel with חלי is found in Jeremiah vi 7. Here Jerusalem's continuing condition ("her wickedness" -- רָעָתָהּ) is described with the words חֶלְיִ, שֹׁד, חָמָס, and מַכָּה, all of which are assumed to be repugnant to God and likely to bring further alienation from him and consequent destruction (verse 5).

A more frequent parallel with מַכָּה elsewhere in Jeremiah is שֶׁבֶר, which most commonly refers to a wounding, fracturing, or brokenness. If we follow this parallel in establishing the meaning of מַכָּה, it seems to mean an externally inflicted wound which affects the body from without, rather than a plague which attacks from within. A good example of this parallel is in Jer. xiv 17, where Jerusalem is described as having been crushed (נִשְׁבְּרָה) by שֶׁבֶר גָּדוֹל ("a mighty blow") . . . מַכָּה נַחְלָה מְאֹד ("a sorely infected wound"). Similarly, מַכָּה is employed three times in Jer. xxx 12-17 (specifically verses 12, 14, 17) in reference to the punishment which God has brought upon Israel and Judah through the instrumentality of the enemy. The language of verse 12 is especially revealing: אָנוּשׁ לְשִׁבְרֵךְ נַחְלָה מַכָּתֵךְ ("you wound is incurable, your injury infected/serious"). Note not only the parallel with שֶׁבֶר but also the juxtaposition of אָנוּשׁ and נַחְלָה which are frequently employed in the descriptions of suffering to indicate severity and a gloomy prognosis. The specific appearance of

מַכָּה and אָנוּשׁ together as in xv 18 is found only in Micah i 9 where the phrase כִּי אֲנוּשָׁה מַכּוֹתֶיהָ ("for her wound is incurable") again refers to the punishment of Yahweh (brought upon Samaria for her sin and reaching to the gates of Jerusalem). Numerous other references could be cited to demonstrate the relation between מַכָּה and the exercise of God's judgment. Important among them because of their occurrence within Jeremiah are xix 8 (in reference to Jerusalem), xlix 17 (in reference to Edom), and l 13 (in reference to Babylon). In each of these cases the "wounds" are visible to those who pass by, and those so wounded become the objects of derision.

Thus it is possible from the BH to interpret Jeremiah's description of his own suffering as a sickness or anguish which wells up either from inside of him or as a wound which is brought upon him from without. The context of the passage could support either of these two interpretations. On the one hand, Jeremiah could be complaining that the עֶבְרָה with which he has been filled (verse 17b) has made him sick as with a plague, unlike his initial experience of "eating" God's words (verse 16) and finding that they brought him joy. The language would be somewhat analagous to that describing the Israelites in the wilderness when they asked for meat, but even as they chewed were struck with a severe plague (מַכָּה רַבָּה מְאֹד). The difference, of course, is that the Israelites were being punished by Yahweh. It is possible that Jeremiah could have seen his "plague" in a

similar light, though he makes no mention of perceiving God's anger against himself. On the other hand, Jeremiah could be complaining that the position into which God has placed him has brought persecution and wounding from all sides. His pain comes from the "blows" struck psychologically (perhaps even physically?) by those to whom he has tried to minister. In a sense it is God's fault, since God is the source of the prophecies of doom which the prophet has been commissioned to deliver. In either case, the final line of verse 18 makes sense. Either God has been deceitful because he has filled the prophet with אַךְ rather than that which would refresh him and it has made him sick, or God has been deceitful in not coming to his rescue when he finds himself lonely and persecuted.

The ancient versions provide some interesting insights into this interpretive problem. The Vulg. reflects the MT most closely by rendering כאב with dolor, a widely used, general word which can refer to both mental and corporeal pain or distress. In similar fashion, מַכָּה is rendered by plaga, which is also somewhat ambiguous, though, in general, has the sense of a blow or wound.[84] Assuming the more common usage, the phrase seems to have "wounding" in view in Jer. xv 18. Both the Vulg. and LXX render verse 18b in the third person singular (rather than the second person singular as in the MT, Pesh., and Targ.) with the referent being "my wound." Thus, rather than God being accused of unreliability, it is the wound which bears this description.

The reason for the confusion is understandable from both a theological and grammatical point of view. First, if the statement is an accusation addressed to God, it is an unusually strong one and can, perhaps, even be considered blasphemous. It is, therefore, a statement which we might expect to find blunted among some of the manuscripts or versions. Second, the grammar allows for confusion since the second person masculine singular and the third person feminine singular forms of the imperfect are identical. Since מַכָּה is feminine, it provides a grammatically understandable antecedant. While this rendering of the phrase is thus somewhat logical, the resultant verse loses its internal logic. It is not at all clear how a "wound" can be "deceitful waters which are not reliable." The image must somehow refer to the fact that the wound will not heal, but this can be described only awkwardly as "deceitfulness." The Targ., as might be expected, also struggles with the theological implications of verse 18b, but solves the problem, not with a third person rendering, but by glossing the second person verb with "your word" and then negating the whole statement. Thus it reads: "Your word will <u>not</u> be lies for me like a spring of water whose waters are failing." It becomes a statement of faith. The extent to which the Targ. was willing to alter the sentence is an indication that the second person meaning was clearly understood, and that it provided a significant problem for the interpreter. Line 18a is again handled ambiguously in

the Targum without a definite indication as to the source of the prophet's suffering.

When we come to the LXX, however, the interpretation is clear. The first phrase is rendered ἵνα τί οἱ λυποῦντές με κατισχύουσί μου;("Why do they that give me pain prevail against me?") employing a plural, masculine participle, a third person plural active verb, and an additional first person singular pronoun (με is the accusative object of the participial phrase, while μου is the object of the active verb which takes the genitive), none of which are present in the MT. A retroversion from the present LXX to Hebrew would yield something like למה מכאיבי חזקוני though there is no evidence elsewhere that such a Vorlage ever existed.[85] It seems more likely that the LXX is providing us with a freely interpretive phrase indicating that Jeremiah's suffering did, indeed, have its source in those who persecuted him, rather than in his possession of God's words.

Thus the weight of the interpretive evidence from the ancient versions supports the view that Jeremiah's suffering was a result of his persecution. Kimchi also supports this interpretation. While he does not enter his opinion in his commentary on the verse itself, he does make mention of it when he comments on Jer. xvii 14: "He seeks healing from the wound and the pain, as he said, 'Why is my pain endless and my wound incurable?' And the pain and wound is, as we interpret it, the despising and cursing."

I would now conclude with the versions that Jeremiah's pain/anguish and his wound, as he mentions them here, relate to the experience of his persecution, rejection, and continuing social isolation at the hands of his countrymen. Verse xv 15a supports this exegesis as Jeremiah pleads with Yahweh to take revenge on his persecutors. Jeremiah seems to choose vocabulary intentionally to describe his condition that he uses elsewhere to describe the brokenness of the people. But God has continually promised them healing, even from their "faithlessness," if they would only return to him (cf. iii 22; xxx 17; xxxiii 6; Hos. vi 1; vii 1; xi 3; xiv 4).[86] It mystifies Jeremiah that God can promise healing to his broken people, who have brought about their own downfall, and yet he apparently cannot or will not heal his prophet, whose brokenness comes, not from disobedience, but from having obediently carried out the task assigned to him. God appears to Jeremiah as thoroughly inconsistent in his application of healing. No wonder he compares Yahweh to a deceitful brook--one which sends life-giving water in abundance at one time, but dries up completely when it is seemingly needed most.

Here as elsewhere it is the root רפא which stands in contrast and as the solution to the unwholeness, pain, and suffering. Brokenness, as it is perceived by the prophet in himself and in the people, is not dealt with by superficial consolation or even by removing the source of the tension. Suffering from whatever cause injures deeply. Wholeness

(שָׁלוֹם) can be restored only through a thorough healing process, and that can be accomplished only by Yahweh himself. When Jeremiah describes his own pain as having refused to be healed (מֵאֲנָא הֵרָפֵא), it is with the understanding that what is necessary only God can give (cf. viii 22; vi 14 = viii 11; li 8, 9).[87] But God has not brought the healing which the prophet has anticipated.

The image of "deceitful waters which are not reliable" (אַכְזָיִב מַיִם לֹא נֶאֱמָנוּ) seems fitting from the prophet's perspective. The image itself is derived from a rather common phenomenon in Palestine. Streams of water (wadis) frequently appear and disappear in relation to the rainfall and cannot be relied upon for help in time of need. Job vi 15-18 makes extended use of the same image to illustrate how he views his "friends." "My brothers have acted deceitfully (בָּגְדוּ cf. Jer. xii 1, 6), like a wadi (נַחַל), like a stream channel of wadis which vanish." Another glimpse of the image is seen in Jer. xviii 14, though here the opposite type of stream is in view, namely, one which is constant. Here God's people are found to have done an "appalling thing" (שַׁעֲרוּרָה עָשְׂתָה מְאֹד --verse 13) because of their inconsistency. More closely linked to the vocabulary of Jer. xv 18b is Isaiah lviii 11: "And you will be like a watered garden, and like springs of water whose waters do not deceive" (אֲשֶׁר לֹא יְכַזְּבוּ מֵימָיו). The appropriateness of the image derives not only from its usefulness within the immediate context, but also from the other ways that

Jeremiah has utilized "water" imagery in relation to God. In ii 13 and xvii 13, Jeremiah refers to God as the מְקוֹר מַיִם חַיִּים ("the fountain of living water"). The context of xvii 13 is particularly striking, since it is another one of Jeremiah's personal laments. He asserts that all who have forsaken the Lord will be put to shame, "because they have forsaken the fountain of living water, even the Lord." He then immediately moves on to a plea for his own healing (verse 14): רְפָאֵנִי יהוה וְאֵרָפֵא הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי וְאִוָּשֵׁעָה כִּי תְהִלָּתִי אָתָּה ("Heal me, Lord, and I will be healed; save me and I will be saved: for you are my praise"). He has not forsaken the Lord. Yahweh is still his praise, and, therefore, he has every right to assume that "the fountain of living (and healing) water" will be available to him.[88] As in xv 18, the context of his need for healing is the persecution of those around him. They have mocked and disclaimed the word which he has delivered (verse 15) and have been his "persecuters" (רֹדְפַי in xvii 18). In this case it seems as if Jeremiah envisions his healing as coming through his vindication. If the "day of disaster" would only come as he predicted (though he is quick to assert in verse 16 that he has not personally longed for that day), then all would be witness to the fact that Jeremiah was a true prophet.

Earlier in the same chapter is also a hymn spoken as words of Yahweh and similar in content to Psalm i. "The man who trusts in the Lord" (הַגֶּבֶר אֲשֶׁר יִבְטַח בַּיהוה --xvii 7)

is contrasted with "the man who trusts in mankind" (הַגֶּבֶר אֲשֶׁר בָּטַח בָּאָדָם --verse 5). The former flourishes because he is "like a tree planted by the water" (כְּעֵץ שָׁתוּל עַל-מָיִם --verse 8), while the latter languishes because he is "like a bush in the desert" (כְּעַרְעָר בָּעֲרָבָה --verse 6). God likens himself to the water which sustains life and provides security even when there is an apparent draught (verse 8c). In light of the pool of meaning attached to water imagery in relation to God in the mind of the prophet, the use of the image to express the prophet's frustration at God's seeming lack of provision for him of sustenance, protection, and healing is entirely appropriate, though many might still argue from theological grounds that it is unduly severe.

Thus, Jer. xv 18 provides a fitting conclusion to the prophet's complaints in chapter xv. While, from the language alone, it is not possible to define with precision the nature of Jeremiah's suffering, it is clear that the language describes a state of marked "unwholeness" and significant personal trauma which may have been mental, emotional, physical, or all three. Pain or unwholeness of this type was so persistent that the healing (רפא) which was required could only come from Yahweh (cf. Jer. xvii 14). The wound refused healing by any other means. The source of Jeremiah's anguish in this passage is the degree of persecution which he had received from his countrymen. Although he likely was aware that there would be resistance, the extent of his suffering was unexpected. Since

Jeremiah's view of his own vocation did not include what he was experiencing, it was only reasonable that his frustrations should finally be turned toward God, who had made promises, but had not intervened as the prophet had anticipated. The problem of pain in the life of the individual will always reduce finally to a problem of God's faithfulness, in any theological setting where God is considered to be sovereign and where there is no additional information to detour this logical assumption. Jeremiah is not expressing that his inward nature has somehow been against the desires of God. The tension is not between his natural impulses and the imperative mandate of the divine word,[89] nor between some personal weakness and his high calling.[90] Rather, the agony which the prophet feels stems from contradictions between the ideal of the prophetic office as he understood it and his experience of that office. Jeremiah was not tempted to surrender to the world or to self-interest. But he did insist that God provide what he felt had been promised, namely deliverance from the troubles brought by his ministry.

Yahweh answers Jeremiah in vss. 19-21 with what amounts to a rebuke and a reiteration of his original call. The first phrase is dramatic: אִם־תָּשׁוּב וַאֲשִׁיבֶךָ ("If you repent and I restore you . . ."). The verbal root שׁוּב is frequently used in Jeremiah who aptly takes advantage of its many, subtle nuances (cf. viii 4, 5; xv 19b). Most frequently (48 instances), it appears in its "covenantal"

usage expressing a change of loyalty on the part of people or God toward each other.[91] Jeremiah had often indicated that all of Judah must "turn back" ("return/repent") from the direction of disobedience in which they were headed (cf. Jer. iii 1, 7, 10, 12, 14, 22; iv 1; v 3; viii 4, 5; xv 7; etc.). In this case, the verb must also be taken in this technical, theological sense.[92] In his struggle with his vocation, Jeremiah had come close to abandoning the very foundation of his self-understanding, namely the covenant which God made with him in his call and which he had mistakenly misinterpreted in light of his cultural presuppositions. His perception of God's faithlessness was based upon an incomplete and inaccurate experience both of his office and God's promises, the understanding of which had been mediated most strongly through his inherited faith and traditional theological precepts. God's response is to point out sharply that Jeremiah has missed the mark and that he must, therefore, turn from the conclusions which he had reached--conclusions which would be as inadequate to sustain his life as the idols were to sustain the life of the people. Repentance or changing loyalty from the erroneous orthodoxy back to the living God was the only solution. His situation here is not unlike the final dialogue between Yahweh and Job (Job xl), although at stake in this instance was a vocation, as well as a theological basis for obedience. In addition to repentance, restoration is also essential. The second verb is also to be read as a part of

the conditional statement, rather than as the resultant clause.[93]

All of the ancient versions support this interpretation, utilizing vocabulary employed elsewhere in Jeremiah to indicate the necessity of repentance on the part of the people. The Jewish commentators, however, are not so singular in their view. While Kimchi follows the interpretation of the versions, Rashi reads the condition of repentance as a statement directed toward Israel. The indication is that if Israel repents, then Jeremiah will in due course be restored. Trani makes a similar statement: "If you succeed in bringing Israel back to me, I will restore you"--the emphasis here being on the success of his prophetic mission. But, unfortunately, God had already revealed that he would fail. Luzzato says that the statement means: "If you return to your task (and not despair), I will give you strength again."[94] These latter views do not express the context of the colon clearly.

The parallel conditional phrase in the second line suggests that Jeremiah's repentance and restoration must include the ability to discern the accurate and precious from the inadequate and frivolous: וְאִם-תּוֹצִיא יָקָר מִזּוֹלֵל ("and if you bring forth the precious from the worthless . . "). The imagery portrays a refining process in which the materials which are at the prophet's disposal are assayed again before assuming that the truth has been attained. The emphasis in the resultant clause on that which is spoken is

an indication that the "precious" refers to those ideas which the prophet utters. He cannot be God's mouthpiece if he obscures God's word. The Targ., followed by Kimchi, interprets this phrase to mean that Jeremiah is to restore those who are wicked back to the place of righteousness. Rashi similarly suggests that the task before Jeremiah is "to bring forth the worthy/respectable man from the evil man" or to lead a person to repentance by bringing out that part of him which is good. This gloss of a somewhat difficult phrase is not satisfactory in the context.

The two phrases, which express the results if Jeremiah should repent, be restored, and be more discerning in his understanding, indicate that he will be affirmed again in two of his primary functions as a prophet. The first phrase is לְפָנַי תַּעֲמֹד ("you will stand before me"), which should be associated with the standing in the "counsel/council of Yahweh" (Jer. xxiii 18, 22; cf. I Kings x 8)--a mark of the true prophet--where the word of God is heard. Those who intercede are also described as "standing before the Lord" (cf. Jer. xv 1; Gen. xviii 22; xix 27; etc.), but this function has been denied the prophet because of the people's obduracy. The second function is that Jeremiah will become God's mouthpiece (כְּפִי תִּהְיֶה --"you will become as my mouth"). Kimchi says that "what you decide and say, will be established as if I were saying it, like he said concerning Samuel the prophet: 'he did not permit any of his words to be without effect' (I Sam. iii 19)." Jeremiah will be given

the authority to speak the word of God as he has done previously. He will stand in God's presence to hear, and he will speak God's word. But it is also possible that, in the absence of a new perspective within his vocation, Jeremiah's ability to function in his prophetic office could be lost.

In the final line of vs. 19, the verb שׁוּב is used skillfully in another literary sense. In conjunction with the preposition אֶל , it seems to mean that the people will at some point turn to Jeremiah, possibly for assistance (cf. Jer. xxxviii 14; xlii 1), but God warns him that he must not depend on (lit.: "turn toward") them. Following the Targ., Kimchi glosses the line to propose that if Jeremiah has too close an association with the people, they might implant him with many of their evil arguments. In light of the tension which Jeremiah is experiencing within his vocation, I would suggest that the line is warning Jeremiah not to listen to the voices of the prophetic orthodoxy of his day. Those who were a part of this orthodoxy would indeed turn toward him as one of their peers, seeking to mimic his authority and to capitalize on the apparent failure of his oracles of woe, but Jeremiah was warned that he should not turn towards them for an understanding of his office. Only God could define for this prophet the dimensions of his singular and mysterious calling.

Verses 20 and 21 constitute a reaffirmation of Jeremiah's original call.[95] The similarity between these verses and Jer. i 18, 19 is striking, but the differences

are also numerous. (See chapter below for a more extended analysis.) Berridge is probably right in suggesting that the similarity between the two passages should not be attributed to "copying," but rather to the fact that both passages are patterned after the salvation oracle.[96] It should be noted that Jeremiah has made very free use of this Gattung (cf. xlii 9-16), however, typically investing it with his own vocabulary and style--an indication of the fact that this material is meant as self-disclosure rather than corporate liturgy.[97] In essence, the verses are a promise of deliverance throughout his prophetic career, but not a promise that Jeremiah would be free from suffering along the way. During the times of agony, he would have to content himself with God's presence and the assurance that the God who had saved (יָשַׁע [H]) Israel (cf. Exod. xiv 30; Ps. cvi 8, 10, 21; Hos. xiii 14) by delivering (נָצַל [H]) her from the grasp of the wicked (cf. Exod. iii 8; xviii 8-10; etc.), would also redeem (פָּדָה [Q]; cf. Deut. vii 8; ix 26; xiii 6; Micah vi 4; etc.) him.

The only significant textual variations within the versions occur at the end of vs. 20, where the LXX omits נְאֻם-יְהוָה ("utterance of Yahweh"), and in vs. 21, where the LXX omits both verbs. The other ancient versions reflect the MT accurately and, in the absence of any substantial grammatical or contextual diffulties, the LXX is not to be preferred. It may be that the text has undergone a very early expansion in vs. 21[98] and that the LXX reflects an

attempt to harmonize two Hebrew texts, but this is mere conjecture.

In summary, Jer. xv 15-21 focuses on the prophet's struggle to understand his pain in relation to his inadequate view of his office and of the nature of the God who has called him. He provides the dialogue for us as a way to confront the prophetic orthodoxy of his day. God's response is recorded as a restatement of Jeremiah's original call. This is evidence that the central theme of the dialogue is the nature of the prophetic vocation and not merely the problem of persecution. It also highlights the importance of chapter i for the interpretation of the so-called "confessions."

Jeremiah xvii 14-18

Chapter xvii has been variously represented from "heterogeneous in the extreme"[99] to a whole which "hangs together in a remarkably logical fashion."[100] No doubt both views have merit in that this chapter seems to be composed of miscellaneous Jeremianic material which has been collected and arranged rather skillfully considering the wide variety of topics and forms which are represented. The chapter opens with a textually corrupt section (vss. 1-4, absent altogether in the LXX), which highlights once again the profound guilt of Judah. Then follows a poem (vss. 5-8) resembling Ps. i and contrasting the fate of the man who trusts in God with the wicked man who trusts only in man.

The form and content is that of a piece of wisdom literature.[101] The affirmation of a theological perspective, in which the just prosper and the wicked suffer just retribution, has led many like Nicholson to deny the passage Jeremianic authenticity, since this is precisely what Jeremiah's own experience has contradicted.[102] On the other hand, there are those like Holladay who regard the section as one of Jeremiah's confessions:

> In 17.5-8 we see a man who has repented from foolish thoughts of despair and consternation before the powerful pressure of public opinion. He had learned to trust Yahweh rather than the opinions of men. The present passage is to be understood as his personal affirmation that he has survived his dry period. Indeed these verses constitute a response to Yahweh's call to repentance in 15.19-21. 103

While this latter view, connecting this passage with chapter xv, is overstated, there is nevertheless no sufficient reason for questioning the origin of the passage with the prophet himself. Particularly the idea that the "man who trusts in Yahweh" will persevere despite the times of "drought" certainly reflects God's assurance to Jeremiah in both i 18-19 and xv 19-21. Verses 9-10 and vs. 11 represent two separate proverbial statements, each focusing on God's just recompense. The connection with what precedes is only thematic, but especially vs. 9 rightly indicates Jeremiah's own experience in relation to his understanding which has deceived him and provided him with a seemingly incurable illness (אָנוּשׁ ; cf. xv 18). But God does indeed "test" (vs. 10; cf. xi 20; xii 3) the internal nature of a person, and

this fact is always taken by the prophet as assurance (xi 20 and xii 3).

Verses 12-13 stand as a final affirmation of the justice of God, and, as such, also an introduction to the personal lament which follows.[104] Rudolph, Bright, and others question the authenticity of these verses by seeing in them an exilic combination of prophetic faith and cultic ideas which are uncharacteristic of Jeremiah.[105] Bright points out that the positive attitude toward the Temple, as expressed in vs. 12, is in contrast with vii 2-15.[106] But a close examination of vii 1-15 reveals that it was not the Temple, nor the belief that God had chosen to make his presence known in a special way in the Temple, which Jeremiah condemned in chapter vii. On the contrary, he affirms in that passage that the Temple indeed was the place which God had chosen to bear his "Name" (vii 10-12). The problem was that the people assumed that their association with the Temple and its rituals would alone guarantee their security, despite their rampant disobedience to the demands of the covenant. It is a mistake to identify Jeremiah with an anti-Temple sentiment.

A positive relationship between the prophet and these verses can be established with respect to the epithets for Yahweh which are utilized in vs. 13. In the first line, he is addressed as "the hope of Israel" (מִקְוֵה יִשְׂרָאֵל) which also appears in the poetic confession to God in xiv 8. In the final line, the epithet is "the fountain of living

water" (מְקוֹר מַיִם-חַיִּים) which occurs in Jer. ii 13 and which contrasts with the imagery which Jeremiah employs in xv 18.[107]

I am assuming that verses 12 and 13 originally formed an independent, Jeremianic expression, which was ideal in this context as a bridge between the earlier material in the chapter and the individual lament which follows. After this introduction, which affirms Yahweh's sovereignty (cf. xii 1a which affirms his righteousness), Jeremiah moves into the lament proper (vss. 14-18). As in the case of xv 15-18, the situation which gave rise to the lament was the prophet's struggle with his opposition and the subsequent issues which the persecution raised in the prophet's own mind with respect to his vocation and the promises of God.

As I have noted elsewhere, the prophet describes his suffering in terms of brokenness or illness. This is implicit in vs. 14 where Jeremiah pleads for healing. The verse begins with the parallel cola: רְפָאֵנִי יְהוָה וְאֵרָפֵא הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי וְאִוָּשֵׁעָה ("Heal me, Yahweh, and I shall be healed; rescue me and I shall be rescued"). The verbs are common ones in the context of lament (cf. Pss. vi 3, 5; xx 22; xxx 3; xxxi 17; cvii 20; etc.). The prophet prays that his suffering, which has come as a result of the contradiction between God's promise of blessing to those who trust in him and his experience of persecution in the preaching God's word, would be alleviated. Kimchi identifies the pain directly with the "despising and cursing" which the prophet

has experienced, but Jeremiah's plea in vs. 17 that Yahweh himself should not be cause of ruin suggests that the wound goes deeper than what can be afflicted by Jeremiah's physical enemies alone. He must be rescued from his inner turmoil--the confusion between his expectations for his prophetic office and the reality of what his obedience to God's call has brought him.

In the final phrase of vs. 14, Jeremiah again professes his loyalty: כִּי תְהִלָּתִי אָתָּה ("for you are my boast"). The translation "my boast" is derived from the LXX which renders תהלה with καύχημά ("boast") in this instance and in two other (out of six) occurrences of תהלה in Jeremiah (xiii 11; li 41 [LXX xxviii 41]; cf. Zeph. iii 19, 20; Deut. x 21). In each of the other passages, the context makes it clear that תהלה carries the idea that a great reputation is at stake. In Jer. xiii 11, God declares that he has bound Israel and Judah to himself like a belt, to be "on display" as the people of his "renown, boast, and honor" (וְלִשֵּׁם וְלִתְהִלָּה וּלְתִפְאֶרֶת). In li 41, God declares that Babylon, which had at one time been the "boast" of the whole earth, would be seized and become a horror among the nations. Again, it is clear that it is Babylon's reputation which will be reversed before a watching world. Jeremiah is affirming in xvii 14b that God has been the one to whom he has tied his own reputation, not just that God is worthy of his adulation. While this interpretation is not reflected in the other ancient versions, it is picked up by both Rashi and Kimchi,

who gloss the MT with מתהלל ומתפאר ("boasting and bragging"). Duhm repoints the consonantal text as תּוֹחַלְתִּי ("my hope"), but his suggestion adds nothing superior to the meaning and is not supported in the versions.[108]

Jeremiah's claim that he has boasted in Yahweh makes the contrasting taunt of his adversaries in vs. 15 all the more striking: הִנֵּה־הֵמָּה אֹמְרִים אֵלָי אַיֵּה דְּבַר־יהוה יָבוֹא נָא ("Behold! they are saying to me, 'Where is the word of Yahweh? Let it come!").[109] It was the "word of the Lord" which Jeremiah had received and forcefully proclaimed. He had spoken with authority on the basis of that word. But his repeated predictions of judgment had at this point gone unfulfilled. As a prophet he now ran the risk of being branded as false on the basis of Deut. xviii 22. In addition, God himself, whom the prophet acknowledged as inextricably tied to the words which he spoke, was also placed in question, allowing the skepticism of the people to be reenforced. It is quite possible that Jeremiah had Isa. v 19 in mind in relation to this mockery, longing that he, too, could counter this attitude with a word of woe. What was needed was a demonstration of God's power.

The opening word of vs. 16 (וְאָנֹכִי --"but I") stands in emphatic contrast to the "they" of vs. 15. Here is Jeremiah's statement of innocence within the Gattung, but it is not so much a personal defense in response to the mockery recorded in vs. 15 as it is a statement of Jeremiah's faithfulness to declare exactly what God has given to him.

Thus, the purpose of the verse is to remind God that the prophet has obediently done exactly as he was commanded, and that the persecution, which he now faces because God's word has not yet been accomplished, must be God's responsibility. Jeremiah cannot see any other alternative. His conscience is clear. The words which he spoke did not have their source within his own desires.

The MT text of the first line (וַאֲנִי לֹא-אַצְתִּי מֵרֹעֶה אַחֲרֶיךָ --lit.: "But I did not press from being a shepherd after you") is difficult to interpret as witnessed by the several possible emendations within the ancient versions. The LXX renders the colon ἐγὼ δὲ οὐκ ἐκοπίασα κατακολουθῶν ὀπίσω σου ("I have not wearied following closely behind you"). It is possible that LXX is following the consonantal MT text here (מרעה being a Hiphil participle), but this is not certain. The negative construction has influenced the unusual interpretation of the verb אַצְתִּי with ἐκοπίασα . Otherwise the Greek would be saying that Jeremiah didn't hurry to obey--a sense not suitable for his defense. The Targ. (וַאֲנָא לָא עַכֵּיבִית עַל מֵימְרָךְ מִלְאִתְנַבָּאָה עֲלֵיהוֹן --"I did not withhold your word of prophesying from them") reflects a Hebrew text עָצַרְתִּי מֵרָעָם אחריך (cf. I Kings xviii 44: Heb. ולא יעצרכה ; Targ. ולא יעכבינך).[110] Sperber says that this represents a graphic confusion of the square alphabet.[111] The Pesh. transposes the noun before the verb and indicates that the Heb. should be בְּרָעָה ("with/in evil"; Pesh. (بشر).[112] Aquila and Symmacus both read a Heb.

מֵרָעָה ("from evil"), like the Pesh., interpreting the colon as a statement regarding the innocence of Jeremiah's motivation in pressing after God.[113] The Vulg. reads Et ego non sum turbatus, te pastorem sequens ("And I am not troubled, following you as pastor/shepherd"), which alters the sense completely and can only be seen as a paraphrastic attempt at the MT, although it does retain the noun as "shepherd." Many other suggestions have been made by the commentators. Baumgartner emends the text to לְרָעָה (hence, "I did not press after you for disaster").[114] Following Skinner, Bright and Thompson suggest that the consonants conceal a phrase parallel to the next colon. They omit אַחֲרֶיךָ and emend the colon to read וַאֲנִי לֹא-אַצְתִּי (לְ)יוֹם רָעָה ("But I have not pressed for a day of evil").[115] Admittedly the attempts by the versions allow for certain speculation in emending the text, but this latter suggestion approaches the fanciful.

While the sense of the MT is not entirely clear, there are those who have opted to retain the text. Rashi glosses the text with "I did not hasten to urge you to lead them by becoming a good shepherd, begging after you to seek compassion for them." He thinks that Jeremiah is denying any responsibility for the current goodwill which the people are enjoying from God. Kimchi says that Jeremiah did not compel himself nor did he worry about being a shepherd, that is a prophet. Berridge cites Jer. ii 8 as an indication that "shepherds" and "prophets" may indeed have had some

parallel significance for Jeremiah. He further suggests that Jeremiah was using the word to draw attention to his own faithful leadership in contrast to the faithlessness of those who had forsaken God (cf. xvii 13).[116] Weiser also retains the text, translating: "Ich habe mich doch nicht entzogen dem Amt des Hirten in deinem Dienst" ("I myself have not withdrawn from the position of shepherd in your service").[117]

A final solution to the text and meaning of this colon is not possible. Either the sense that Jeremiah is denying a personal desire for retribution in his complaint (a meaning similar to the second colon), or the sense that Jeremiah is affirming his past willingness to act as God's representative, would fit the context.

The second colon is somewhat more transparent, as Jeremiah says: וְיוֹם אָנוֹשׁ לֹא הִתְאַוֵּיתִי ("I have not desired the inevitable/disastrous day"). The use of the word אָנוֹשׁ is unusual. LXX, Vulg., Pesh., Aquila and Symmachus all read the Hebrew as אָדָם and render the phrase as "the day of man." Presumably, the meaning still reflects some kind of disaster akin to the "day of the Lord" elsewhere, but the phrase would be a very unusual one, appearing only here in the OT. Furthermore, אָנוֹשׁ ("man") is not a commonly used word in Jeremiah (unlike Isaiah where it appears 7 times), occurring only in Jer. xx 10 in an idiomatic phrase. The Targ. (followed by Rashi and Kimchi) translates the word with בִּישׁ ("evil"). Rashi indicates that this was the day

of divine punishment, but Kimchi says that the calamatous day was the day when God compelled Jeremiah to prophesy. It was a bad day, because it meant persecution for the prophet. And it certainly was not an experience which was sought by the prophet. Elsewhere in Jeremiah, אָנוּשׁ is used to describe a wound which is "incurable" (cf. Jer. xxx 12, 15; xv 18; xvii 9). It is this sense which I believe to be in view here. Jeremiah is not focusing solely on the fact that the judgment which is to come will be evil, but also on the fact that there can be no recovery from that day.[118] The people who say, "Let it come," do not understand what is entailed. Jeremiah has been given the task to herald the disaster, but he certainly would not long for it. Part of his pain is in his identification with the people who would undergo the devastation (Jer. x 17-22). Anyone who understood the "day of the Lord" would not beckon it (cf. Amos v 18).

The emphatic words אַתָּה יָדָעְתָּ ("You know!") stand virtually as an independent clause (cf. LXX, Vulg, Pesh.), expressing once again Jeremiah's confidence in God who is not blind either to the visible situation or to his own hidden motives.

Furthermore, the last line affirms Jeremiah's obedience to his call. What has come from his lips stands as an open record before God and is that which God has commanded him to speak: מוֹצָא שְׂפָתַי נֹכַח פָּנֶיךָ הָיָה ("what my lips have said, has been before you"). The Vulg. correctly paraphrases the

line as, "that which went out of my lips, has been right in your sight" (quod egressum est de labiis meis, rectum in conspectu tuo fuit). The phrase מוֹצָא שְׂפָתַי appears elsewhere only in Ps. lxxxix 35, where Yahweh is the subject declaring his faithfulness to the words of his covenant with David. It may be an idiomatic expression utilized in relation to the proclamation of covenant truth.

Thus, verse 16 is a declaration of Jeremiah's careful obedience to his vocation. While the people mock him with his prophecies of doom, which were as yet unrealized, Jeremiah reminds God that the Sovereign knows that he has been faithful as a prophet, that he has certainly not been anxious for the disaster, but that he has spoken accurately what has been given him.

Verse 17 continues as Jeremiah's request for preservation and his affirmation of confidence. The first line reads אַל-תְּהִי-לִי לְמְחִתָּה (lit.: "Do not be to me for a ruin"; cf. Jer. xlviii 39 and use of verbal form of חתת in i 17 and xvii 18). LXX interprets this as a request that God not act like a "stranger" (ἀλλοτρίωσιν) precisely when he is needed by the prophet. The Targ. glosses the line with "Don't let your word be lies to me," an interpretation followed by Rashi. Kimchi expands this thought slightly by saying that the prophet is pleading that the words of his prophecy not fail, otherwise he will end up as a ruin in front of the people. In his vocation, Jeremiah has so identified himself with God and God's word, that it is

possible to understand this phrase as a plea either that the prophet's loyalty to Yahweh might not end in his destruction or that God's word not go unvalidated.

In contrast with his plea, is his affirmation that God indeed will be his refuge when the disaster strikes: מַחֲסִי־ אַתָּה בְּיוֹם רָעָה ("You are my refuge in the evil day"). The final expression, בְּיוֹם רָעָה , is reproduced exactly in Jeremiah only in vs. 18, where the two-fold description of destruction seems to indicate that it is "the Day of the Lord" which is in view(cf. Amos vi 3; Micah ii 3).[119] The connection with יוֹם אָנוֹשׁ from the previous verse is also evidence for this interpretation. A similar expression is עֵת רָעָה ("time of evil") in Jer. ii 27, 28; xi 12; and xv 11. This latter phrase specifically refers to the time of divine judgment in xi 12. Kimchi, however, suggests an alternate interpretation, glossing the text with, "In the day when they are scheming against me, you will be my refuge." In this case, Jeremiah is referring to the specifics of his personal situation. Some further evidence for this view comes in the use of the phrase in Pss. xxvii 5 and xli 2 (and the use of the similar phrase in Jer. ii 27, 28 and xv 11), where, within individual laments, it refers to more personal kinds of trouble. In the former (and more likely) interpretation, Jeremiah expresses a note of apprehension as he anticipates the judgment, which he has proclaimed, but for which he has not longed (vs. 16). He is, afterall, still a member of the community which will be

devastated. In the latter and more personal elucidation of the line, Jeremiah affirms his confidence that Yahweh will take up his cause against his persecutors. In both cases, God is seen as the prophet's only hope.

Because of its seemingly harsh and bitter tone, verse 18 has received a great deal of comment. Baumgartner, for example, finds the verse morally objectionable but psychologically understandable, as Jeremiah simply loses patience.[120] Chambers says:

> His violent anger was provoked by the opposition and mockery which he faced and irritated by the apparently useless struggle. Sometimes his anger springs from pure zeal for the cause of God; at other times his bitterness and discouragement lead him to revolt. The 'precious' and the 'base' are found together. . . .Not long after a declaration of innocence, the prophet implicates himself in the very crime against which he defends himself. Consistency must not be urged on this turbulent spirit. 121

On the other hand, Reventlow, who views this entire section as a general lament and not indicative of a peculiarly prophetic speech, sees no theological problem.[122] Actually, the verse provides less difficulty than some of the modern commentators suggest. The best witness of this fact is that neither the ancient versions nor the medieval commentators have any difficulty whatever with the verse, rendering it quite literally and without lengthy glosses. The only significant comment by Kimchi has to do with grammar more than interpretation.

The first two cola are parallel in their structure:

יֵבֹשׁוּ רֹדְפַי וְאַל-אֵבֹשָׁה אֲנִי / יֵחַתּוּ הֵמָּה וְאַל-אֵחַתָּה אֲנִי (lit.:

"Let my persecutors be ashamed, but let me not be ashamed; let them be dismayed, but let me not be dismayed"). It should be noted that Jeremiah is specifically referring to those who have persecuted him and not to the people in general.[123] These have mocked God and refused to heed his word. It is not self-vindication that Jeremiah seeks as much as it is vindication of his office and the word which he has proclaimed. The collocation of the verbal roots חתת and בוש is distinctive of Jeremiah, occurring seven times within the book (Jer. viii 9; xiv 4; xvii 18; xlviii 1, 20, 39; l 2), whereas elsewhere חתת is usually found parallel to כלם (cf. Pss. xxxv 4; xl 15; Isa. xli 11) or חפר (Ps. xxxv 4; xl 15; lxx 3).[124] In Jer. i 17, חתת is used to indicate what will happen to the prophet if he does not speak courageously. At this point, he has been faithful and, thus, he demands that it be their courage that "snaps" rather than his.[125] The idea of shame suggests that his enemies are the ones who are to be proven guilty.

In the final line of the verse, Jeremiah requests that the "day of evil" (יוֹם רָעָה) be brought upon them. This is in direct response to their own taunting request that it come in vs. 15, and to the sentence of guilt which Jeremiah assumes that they bear. But he also adds וּמִשְׁנֶה שִׁבָּרוֹן שָׁבְרֵם (lit.: "and destroy them with double destruction"). Kimchi carefully explains that this is not to be read as the "second destruction," but rather as "destruction after destruction." The thought is similar to Jer. xvi 18.

With the earlier statements of individual lament in Jeremiah (xi 18-23; xii 1-6; xv 10-11, 15-21), the words of the prophet are followed by Yahweh's reply. Here, however, and in the three remaining laments (xviii 18-23; xx 7-13; 14-18), no response is forthcoming. God is certainly not obligated to answer his prophet. It may be that no answer was required or that none could be given which would have furthered Jeremiah's understanding. But it might also be the case that a recorded answer would not have served Jeremiah's purpose for including these self-disclosures, namely as an attempt to counteract the prophetic orthodoxy of his day which had been so determinative in certain aspects of his own vocation and so influential for the people. Jer. xvii 14-18 is a vivid witness to the struggle for prophetic authentication. Had the prophetic word of Jeremiah ultimately not been fulfilled, his entire ministry would have been discredited and he would not have been remembered, except perhaps as a gifted eccentric. But it was but a few years from the time when this lament was first uttered (or written) that history recorded the consummation of his prophetic word. It was this fulfillment which ultimately served as Yahweh's response. The orthodoxy of his day, with its emphasis on royal and Temple theology, and with its ready proponents among the "professional" prophets, served to bolster the confidence of Jeremiah's detractors and persecutors. In this passage (and the next), Jeremiah records something of the agony of his pilgrimage during that

period between the time that he had experienced the clear receipt of the word of Yahweh and had obediently transmitted it to his generation and the time of its fulfillment. It was a period of external bombardment and internal grappling with the meaning of his vocation and the dynamics of his relationship with God. Ultimately, these passages were meant to serve both as a warning to those who would too readily rely on the external religion of tradition as authority, and as a corrective and encouragement to those who saw suffering as incompatible with a divine call and subsequent obedience.

Jeremiah xviii 18-23

If Jeremiah's expression in xvii 18 of his desire that judgment come upon his persecutors seems strident and unworthy of the prophet to some ears, this passage must sound totally appalling. Jer. xviii 19-23 is Jeremiah's self-disclosure of his reponse to a plot against his life, which is described in the introductory prose quotation of vs. 18. It is a passage full of invective and the demand to Yahweh that the prophet's cause be vindicated. Indeed, the key to understanding the passage is the fact that the plot against Jeremiah's life is the result of the people's rejection of Jeremiah's prophetic role, both as their intercessor and as the one who has delivered the authentic word of Yahweh. Jeremiah perceives this plot not only as a personal offense, but also as an offense against God

himself.

In the wider context of chapter xviii, the self-disclosure serves as a further illustration of the fact that these people were not the raw material (or "clay," cf. xviii 1-10) through whom the purposes of Yahweh could be fulfilled. In their obduracy (xviii 12), they had rejected the covenant and with it the true meaning of the Davidic king, the Temple, and the city of Jerusalem (xvii 24-26). Repentance would have been an indication that the people presented material which could yet be shaped in the hands of the Sovereign, but instead there was only unremitting resistance to his purposes. In the face of such "unnatural" behaviour (xviii 13-16), the only destiny left to these people was to experience the parching, destructive "wind from the east"--their enemies, the Babylonians--who would devastate the land as God turned his back on them even as they had long since forsaken him (vs. 17).

The details of the plot against Jeremiah are recorded in vs. 18. The connecting waw which opens the verse suggests that it was because of oracles of doom, like the one recorded in vss. 13-17, that the plot was instigated. While the people recognized that Jeremiah spoke in the manner of a prophet ("thus says the Lord"), their supposition was that he was unneeded and, therefore, more of a bother than he was worth. The enduring, traditional institutions, which had the function of mediating divine communication to them, were intact. Torah (or "instruc-

tion"-- תורה) would still come from the priests, wisdom (עצה) would come from the wisemen, and "word" (דבר) would come from the prophets. Authority enough was available from functionaries who were supposed to know the ways and means of God. Therefore, nothing would be lost if this "prophet of doom" was set aside. Furthermore, the implication may be that, since the institutions of the day were not corroborating his message, Jeremiah's words could be considered false anyway, and they would be rendering a service by putting aside his blasphemous utterances. Here is a primary statement of the impact of misguided orthodoxy supporting the complacency of the populace.

In this case, the actual plot did not involve physical harm (cf. xi 19), but rather a campaign of discrediting and ignoring the prophet. The final line of vs. 18 reads: לְכוּ וְנַכֶּהוּ בַלָּשׁוֹן וְאַל-נַקְשִׁיבָה אֶל-כָּל-דְּבָרָיו "Come, let us bring charges against him and let us pay no attention to his words"). The first part of the plot literally reads, "Let us smite him with the tongue."[126] The image recalls Jer. ix 7 ("Their tongue is a deadly arrow; it speaks with deceit"), which is perhaps the basis of the interpretation in the Targ. that this represents an attempt to slander Jeremiah.[127] But slander was not really necessary since he could be discredited on the basis that his prophecies of doom had gone unfulfilled. The LXX contains an interesting variant in the explanation of the second part of the plan by omitting the negative. Hence, it reads, "and let us listen

to all of his words," presumably meaning that his enemies should gather evidence from his speech to use against him. While the variant is supported by some commentators (cf. Cornill, Skinner, etc.), it has no support in the other ancient versions or in 4QJer^{a} from Qumran.

The "confession" proper opens with an invocation that Yahweh hear the prophet: הַקְשִׁיבָה יהוה אֵלַי וּשְׁמַע לְקוֹל יְרִיבָי ("Give heed to me, O Lord, and listen to the sound of my adversaries"). The final word as it appears in the MT is in dispute in the ancient versions. The LXX, Targ., Pesh., and 4QJer^{a} from Qumran all indicate a reading רִיבִי ("my case"), which is more congruent with other statements of this type in Jeremiah (cf. xi 20 and xx 12). However, the Vulg. and Kimchi (departing from the Targ.) retain the MT. The utilization of the word קול in the construct relationship with ריבי also provides an argument for the retention of the MT. קול appears thirty times in construct relationships in the first 25 chapters of Jeremiah, and in every instance the word highlights an actual sound rather than a piece of information (with the possible exception of x 22 where the phrase is קוֹל שְׁמוּעָה --"a sound of a report"). If that is the case here, Jeremiah is referring to the clamor which the accusations of his persecutors are producing. It is quite possible that both readings represent very old variations of the text. Either reading makes sense.

In vs. 20, Jeremiah presents the motive for his complaint. The verse opens with the question, "Should evil

be the recompense for good?" (הֲיִשָּׁלֵם תַּחַת-טוֹבָה רָעָה). Similar to his statement in xv 11, Jeremiah represents himself as having acted in good faith both toward God and toward those who are now persecuting him. His reference is not to some personal manifestation of "goodness," but rather to the obedience to his prophetic vocation exercised on their behalf. He has interceded before God for these people to turn away Yahweh's wrath and to restore their peace: זְכֹר עָמְדִי לְפָנֶיךָ לְדַבֵּר עֲלֵיהֶם טוֹבָה לְהָשִׁיב אֶת-חֲמָתְךָ מֵהֶם ("Remember how I stood before you to speak good on their behalf--to turn your wrath from them"). As in the case of xv 19 and xxiii 18, 22, the idiom "to stand before" God suggests the prophet's rightful position in God's council/counsel and relates both to the role of intercession and to the role of messenger. Here it is his intercession which Jeremiah puts forth as his characteristic response. It is appropriate that he should highlight the beneficial words which he has previously spoken in light of what will follow.

In the middle of vs. 20, the phrase כִּי-כָרוּ שׁוּחָה לְנַפְשִׁי ("for they have dug a pit for my life") represents the evil compensation which appears to the prophet as so unjust. Rudolph (BHS) and others suggest that it should be omitted as a needless, premature anticipation of vs. 22b. However, the apposition of the colon to the word "evil" makes it quite appropriate. LXX expansively glosses the phrase with ὅτι συνελάλησαν ῥήματα κατὰ τῆς ψυχῆς μου καὶ τὴν κόλασιν αὐτῶν ἔκρυψάν μοι ("For they have spoken words against my

life and have hidden their punishment for me"). One can only speculate as to what such a gloss represents, especially when the similar Hebrew text in vs. 22c is rendered so differently by the LXX. Janzen suggests that the LXX is an "attempt to make sense of an obscure passage."[128] But the sentence certainly does not appear as "obscure" in the MT. In 4QJer^{a} from Qumran, the text is broken, but the MT would fit the lacuna perfectly. Both here and in vs. 22, the image should be read as figurative language expressing the entrapment which Jeremiah's persecutors had planned for him in their accusations.

Verses 21-23 contain Jeremiah's vehement cries for vengeance. The statements are so strong that some of the commentators have omitted them as insertions of a later author.[129] The imprecations are in the style of those found in Ps. cix 1-20, although, in this case, all of the desired results relate to the devastations surrounding a great seige. The curses also collate with those associated with covenant disobedience (cf. Deut. xxviii), and herein lies a key to their interpretation. For Jeremiah, patience had run out. He had repeatedly reminded the people of their covenant disobedience and proclaimed the doom which would be inevitable should they persist. He had prayed for them and wept at the visions of their demise. He had sacrificed a normal, sociable life, which included a family and friends, for a lonely, symbolic existence. And what he had received in return had been mockery, persecution, and plots against

his life. God had repeatedly told him that the doom of the nation (and also Jeremiah's enemies; cf. xi 21-23) was assured. But God had also waited. Now Jeremiah could wait no longer. In his view, it was time for judgment to fall. Even his identification with the people and his understanding that he, too, would experience the calamity, was not enough to restrain his heart. So he called for the end.

The phrases are dramatic. "Therefore give their sons to famine" (לָכֵן תֵּן אֶת-בְּנֵיהֶם לָרָעָב ; cf. Deut. xxviii 53-57). "Hurl them to the power of the sword" (וְהַגִּרֵם עַל-יְדֵי-חָרֶב ; cf. Deut. xxviii 25-26).[130] "Let their wives be made childless and widows" (וְתִהְיֶנָה נְשֵׁיהֶם שַׁכֻּלוֹת וְאַלְמָנוֹת ; cf. Deut. xxviii 32, 41, 54-57).[131] "Let their men be victims of death/pestilence" (וְאַנְשֵׁיהֶם יְהִיוּ הֲרֻגֵי מָוֶת cf. Deut. xxviii 21-22, 35, 59-61; Jer. xv 2). "Let their young men be smitten by the sword in battle" (בַּחוּרֵיהֶם מֻכֵּי-חָרֶב בַּמִּלְחָמָה ; cf. Deut. xxviii 25, 49-52). "Let a cry for help be heard from (LXX: 'in') their houses, when you bring a raiding party against them suddenly" (תִּשָּׁמַע זְעָקָה מִבָּתֵּיהֶם כִּי-תָבִיא עֲלֵיהֶם גְּדוּד פִּתְאֹם ; cf. Deut. xxviii 49-52).

What follows in vss. 22b and 23a is a further note of personal defense. Again the prophet mentions the plot against him: "They have dug a pit to capture me and they have set snares for my feet" (כִּי-כָרוּ שִׁיחָה לְלָכְדֵנִי וּפַחִים טָמְנוּ לְרַגְלָי.[132] As in vs. 20, the interpretation of this line should be figurative, although vs. 23a indicates that Jeremiah also suspected that his enemies ultimately

wanted to kill him.[133] The formulation of vs. 23a (וְאַתָּה יְהוָה יָדַעְתָּ --"But you, O Lord, know . . .") is similar to xii 3 and xv 15, and Jeremiah again takes refuge in the fact that God knows more thoroughly than the prophet himself all that is being devised against him. Jeremiah, therefore, indicates a note of confidence that God will listen to his request. It is the prophet who stands on the side of God's justice.

In the closing phrases, Jeremiah vents his final plea that judgment fall and that it not be delayed longer through God's mercy. He exclaims: אַל-תְּכַפֵּר עַל-עֲוֹנָם וְחַטָּאתָם מִלְּפָנֶיךָ אַל-תֶּמְחִי ("Do not forgive their offenses, nor blot out their sin from your sight"). BDB, in an uncharacteristically long comment on the meaning of כפר [P] in this passage, says that: "It is conceived that God in his sovereignty may himself provide an atonement or covering for men and their sins which could not be provided by men."[134] This is one further explanation which might have occurred to Jeremiah to the questions of why the wicked were allowed to prosper and why God's word was so slow in being fulfilled. God may have simply decided to atone for their sin through means not available to man or he may have considered their Temple sacrifices as efficacious through some mysterious grace. Hence, his justice would be fulfilled by means apart from a visible judgment. This possibility was repugnant to the prophet, since it effectively negated his message. There was no point in calling people to repentance, if God would

cover their sins through other means.

Again, it is his prophetic vocation in conflict with the propnetic orthodoxy of the day which is in the background here. The other prophets supported the claim of the cult, that the observance of cultic ritual was in itself an effective instrument for insuring God's favor. But Jeremiah preached a gospel which was grounded in covenant obedience and merely symbolized in the ritual. If his enemies were allowed to escape, his proclamation would have been for nought, and the mistaken orthodoxy of the Temple cult would have been given a tacit sanction. So Jeremiah insisted that the offenses of his enemies be fully reckoned. Further, he states: וְהִיוּ מֻכְשָׁלִים לְפָנֶיךָ בְּעֵת אַפְּךָ עֲשֵׂה בָהֶם ("but let them be brought down before you; in the time of your anger act against them"). Rather than reading the opening verb with the K^{e}tîḇ, וְהָיוּ , the LXX reads a Heb. Vorlage יְהִי מְכֻשְׁלָם (γενέσθω ἡ ἀσθένεια αὐτῶν --"may their weakness be [... .before you]"; cf. Jer. vi 21). This is an attractive alternative but is not supported by any of the other ancient versions. There is no real difficulty with the MT as it stands, especially if it is interpreted as a cry that the enemies be hurled down before the judge like the criminals they are.[135] Jeremiah had experienced something of God's anger in the oracles of doom which he had been called to announce. In this instance, he called upon God to exercise his anger.

While the prophet's rhetoric is obviously charged with

emotion, his demands are not unreasonable in light of his experience both of God's זַעַף ("wrath") and his own frustration at the unbearable circumstances in which he found himself. With his patience at an end, he called upon God to act, bringing upon the people what God himself had already indicated would be their portion. At this point in his career, Jeremiah had been driven by his own pain away from his position of compassion and indentification (at least with those who plotted against him).

Jeremiah xx 7-13

Chapter xx opens with a prose description of Jeremiah's persecution at the hands of Pashhur son of Immer, who was "chief officer" (פָּקִיד נָגִיד) in the Temple. In its present editorial position, the incident follows a sermon in which Jeremiah prophesied against Jerusalem and the nation, saying that the seige would be so disastrous that there would not even be room to bury all of the dead in Topheth (Valley of Ben Hinnom). Pashhur was seemingly responsible for the maintainence of order in the Temple area and for dealing with troublemakers (cf. Jer. xxix 26). After he heard Jeremiah, Pashhur had him beaten (LXX says that it was Pashhur himself who beat him) and placed in confinement.[136] Upon his release the next morning, Jeremiah gave Pashhur the symbolic name מָגוֹר מִסָּבִיב ("terror all around"). In Jer. vi 25, the same epithet is used alongside the phrase כִּי חֶרֶב לְאוֹיֵב ("since the enemy has a sword") in describing the

enemy from the north. In Jer. xlvi 5 and xlix 29, a similar motif of destruction is present (cf. Lam. ii 22; Ps. xxxi 14). The reference to the sword in xx 4, suggests that the meaning of the name here is likewise "terror or destruction will surround you on every side, i.e. you will be the center of the slaughter."[137] In the next verses, Jeremiah reiterates his prophecy of doom for Judah, indicating that Pashhur and his household would be carried into exile to Babylon,[138] where they would finally die. The closing phrase of vs. 6 is significant as it identifies Pashhur as one who had prophesied lies (אֲשֶׁר־נִבְּאתָ לָהֶם בַּשָּׁקֶר --"for you prophesied falsehood to them"; cf. xiv 13). In other words, in addition to his official position as an "overseer," Pashhur was also one of the prophets who had spoken words of "peace" in the name of Yahweh to the people. His confrontation with Jeremiah represented not only an action to contain a "troublemaker," but also an attempt to silence prophetic opposition.

Therefore, Jeremiah's complaint which follows is set in the context of another challenge to his vocation. Whether the following passage was written in reponse to this incident or not, it is an understandable reaction as Jeremiah struggled to comprehend his own situation in face of those who had offered a different message, had actively persecuted him, and had thus far appeared more accurate in their prophecies than he.

Jer. xx 7 opens with a powerful statement of the

prophet's experience of the control of God over his life. He exclaims: פִּתִּיתַנִי יְהוָה וָאֶפָּת חֲזַקְתַּנִי וַתּוּכָל ("You beguiled me, O Lord, and I was persuaded; you overpowered me and you triumphed"). The verbs which are used are difficult to translate because of their rich and diverse meanings--a fact not overlooked by as skillful a communicator as Jeremiah. The root פתה describes an attempted act of persuasion where the perpetrator uses everything at his disposal to effect the desired response. It is used, for example, to describe sexual seduction (cf. Exod. xxii 15; Hos. ii 16 [Eng. ii 14]; Job xxxi 9) or enticement through sexual means (cf. Judg. xvi 5). Heschel takes this interpretation further by noting that חזק is occasionally used in reference to rape (cf. Deut. xxii 25; Judg. xix 25; II Sam. xiii 11). In the combination of the two verbs, Jeremiah is using the strongest possible imagery to express the effect of God on his life.[139] Heschel's case is somewhat weakened by the fact that a third verb, יכל, , also appears, which does not have any specifically sexual connotation. The Vulg. is close to this interpretation by rendering the first phrase with: Seduxisti me, Domine, et seductus sum ("You seduced/deceived me, Lord, and I was seduced"). The Pesh. also indicates allurement, utilizing the same verb that renders Adam's enticement by the serpent (ܐܫܕ). Rashi and Kimchi, on the other hand, indicate that the meaning is much more like "persuade." Kimchi explains that this is a reference to the divine dialogue of

chapter i, in which Jeremiah was "persuaded" by God in the course of their conversation.

Another important usage of פתה is I Kings xxii 20-22 (cf. also the prophetic context in Ezek. xiv 9), where the the context is God's activity in relation to the false prophets whom Micaiah opposed. Here the verb seems to mean "to lure into a position of exploitation." God sent a "lying spirit" (רוּחַ שֶׁקֶר) to be in the mouths of the prophets. The reference suggests that it was commonly assumed that there existed a "spirit of prophecy" (cf. Zech. xiii 2) which could inspire either the true or the false. In this case, the spirit of delusion was sent from God, and, under that influence, the cult prophets declared a message that was not in accord with the truth. They were exploited by God for a more mysterious purpose. It is quite possible that Jeremiah was confronting God with this scenario for his own life. "You have lured me into an impossible situation in which I thought that I was speaking truth, but the events now suggest that my words may have actually been lies," Jeremiah would be saying. "I didn't see through the deception, and I was expoited." This may be the background for the LXX and Targ. translations, both of which use the same words to render פתה here as in I Kings xxii 20-22 (and II Chron. xviii 19-21) (LXX: με, κύριε, και ἠπατήθην . ἠπάτησάς--"You deceived me, Lord, and I was deceived"; Targ.: שַׁבְיְנָנִי '' וְאִשְׁתַּבַּשְׁית --"You entangled/confused me, Lord, and I was confused"). This interpretation is

congruent with the context of Jeremiah's vocational anguish.

Whatever the exact meaning of the first colon (and it is likely that Jeremiah had more than one in mind), the next phrase indicates that Jeremiah felt little choice in the matter. God overpowered him (חזק) and triumphed (יכל). Bright and others have read the first verb as a Hiphil rather than a Qal with the sense "you seized me."[140] In either case, Jeremiah asserts that God has had the upper hand. His agonizing situation is directly related to God's ineluctable call in his life. Jeremiah is not questioning God's justice, nor is he complaining that God has violated his promises to the prophet, so much as he is lamenting the nature of his prophetic vocation. Jeremiah recognizes the total claim which God has on him.[141] T. H. Robinson has said, "The fire of prophecy blazed within him, and his whole soul was torn asunder between the impossibility of going on and the impossibility of refraining. Such conflict and agony of spirit have hardly any parallel in the records of man's spiritual life."[142]

In the final line of vs. 7 and vs. 8, Jeremiah describes his unexpected experience of serving as God's prophet. His vocational understanding had led him to anticipate that the people would listen to the word of Yahweh which he spoke and repent of their wickedness. Instead, they turned on him with mockery and persecution. He had become a laughingstock (לעג) rather than a harbinger of hope.

Verse 8 opens with the phrase: כִּי-מִדֵּי אֲדַבֵּר אֶזְעָק ("For as often as I speak, I cry out"). The first verb refers to Jeremiah's prophetic speech, while the second relates to his laments and anxiety.[143] זעק occurs frequently within individual laments denoting an anxious call for help.[144] In Jer. xlviii 31, it appears in parallel with ילל ("wail") and הגה ("mourn") indicating intense anguish.[145] His cries may be for himself, or they may be on behalf of the obdurate people. In either case, there are two warring elements within the prophet's vocational experience. On the one hand, is his obedience to his call to speak God's word, and on the other hand, is the pain triggered by the exercise of that gift.

In the second phrase, Jeremiah characterizes his message which was designed to have impact on his hearers. He says: חָמָס וָשֹׁד אֶקְרָא ("'Violence and ruin!' I proclaim/shout"). The phrase חָמָס וָשֹׁד also appears in Jer. vi 7 (cf. Isa. lx 18), where it describes the wickedness which is a part of the city of Jerusalem and which has caused her to be so sick and wounded (חָלְיִי וּמַכָּה). It is possible that this was a standard cry relating to the violation of social justice.[146] The message was intended to awaken the people from their lethargy with regard to their evil condition. Although the message was strident, a call to recognize the reality of the corruption around and within people is always a message of hope. Healing can only begin when the patient finally realizes that he is sick and needs

help.

In the final line of vs. 8, Jeremiah again highlights his conflict. In speaking God's word of reproach, the result has only been that he himself has become the object of mocking reproaches. He has suffered, but no repentance has been forthcoming; no lives have changed. He laments: כִּי-הָיָה דְבַר-יהוה לִי לְחֶרְפָּה וּלְקֶלֶס כָּל-הַיּוֹם ("Surely the word of Yahweh has become for me an abuse and source of ridicule all the time").[147]

Verse 9 relates Jeremiah's solution to his dilemma. The opening clause reads: וְאָמַרְתִּי לֹא-אַזְכִּרֶנּוּ וְלֹא-אֲדַבֵּר עוֹד בְּשְׁמוֹ ("Whenever I say, 'I will not remember it, and I will not speak again in his name, . . ."). The first part of Jeremiah's statement could also be read, "I'll forget him." This seems to be the intent of the Targ., Vulg., and Pesh. (as well as Kimchi).[148] LXX expands the phrase with "I will not name the name of the Lord," in order to clarify the ambiguity. But the most logical referent for the pronominal suffix is "the word of Yahweh" from vs. 8b. This is also the implied subject of vs. 9b ("it [the word] is like a fire within me . . ."). It is not God over which the prophet has a conflict, but rather God's word, the possession of which is his primary credential as a prophet (see below). Just mentioning God would not have earned him ridicule--even the false prophets did that--but rather proclaiming Yahweh's oracles. Jeremiah would rather forget what he has heard in God's counsel/council and no longer

exercise his call to speak.

But this cannot be accomplished. Whenever he has tried, his experience has been the same: וְהָיָה בְלִבִּי כְּאֵשׁ בְּעֻרָת עָצֶר בְּעַצְמֹתָי ("it becomes within me [lit.: in my heart] like a burning fire imprisoned in my bones"). The use of the "fire" image in relation to God's word is unique to Jeremiah (it appears in both poetry and prose passages, cf. Jer. v 14; xxiii 29). Elsewhere in the OT, it is God himself who is the consuming fire (cf. Exod. xxiv 17; Deut. iv 24; ix 3; Isa. xxxiii 14; etc.). Of the ancient versions, only the Vulg. renders the word עָצֶר as "imprisoned," although the MT certainly appears to be clear.[149] The Targ. has שַׁפְיָן ("flooding"), which suggests a corruption of שׁרף ("to burn"). If such a Vorlage existed it would explain the LXX and Pesh. which both read "burning in my bones." The meaning of the line is plain. God's word is too powerful to be contained. Once it was implanted in the prophet, it "burned" until it found appropriate release. Jeremiah had to speak.

And so the final phrases of the verse: וְנִלְאֵיתִי כַּלְכֵּל וְלֹא אוּכָל. As I will explain in detail in a chapter below, the translation of the line should be: "I am weary holding it in; and I cannot triumph!" The final phrase echoes in the negative what Jeremiah declared about God in vs. 7. God had triumphed and Jeremiah must fulfill his calling. But when he prophesied, the only result was persecution for himself, so Jeremiah decided to be silent.

When he was silent, God's word burned within him and he could not contain it. He could not win! He could not triumph over God, nor could he regain dominion over his life (if in fact he ever had it, cf. i 5).

Jeremiah returns once more in vs. 10 to a description of his persecution. He has heard the "malicious whispering campaign"[150] (כִּי שָׁמַעְתִּי דִּבַּת רַבִּים --lit.: "For I have heard the calumny of many"), mocking him with the very phrase which he used to warn them of the coming destruction (i.e. "There goes 'Terror-on-every-side'"-- מָגוֹר מִסָּבִיב ; cf. vi 25; xx 3; etc.). "Denounce him! Let us denounce him! (הַגִּידוּ וְנַגִּידֶנּוּ)," they conspired.[151] Even his friends (כֹּל אֲנוֹשׁ שְׁלוֹמִי), he states parenthetically, were watching for him to stumble (שֹׁמְרֵי צַלְעִי --cf. Ps. xxxv 15; xxxviii 18; Job xviii 12). LXX reads this line as a vocative, continuing the quotation of the rabble from the previous line. Skinner emends the text to שְׁלֹמוֹ שִׁמְרוּ צַלְעוֹ ("[Every one] of his friends, watch for his stumbling!"), in agreement with LXX, in order to include the entire verse in apposition to "whisper." The emendation is attractive but unnecessary. Undoubtedly there has been some textual confusion in earlier Hebrew editions, as witnessed by the fact that of the ancient versions only the Targ. renders the MT of the middle portion of the verse closely.[152] The final line, however, is relatively consistent in all the versions: אוּלַי יְפֻתֶּה וְנוּכְלָה לוֹ וְנִקְחָה נִקְמָתֵנוּ מִמֶּנּוּ ("perhaps he will be deceived and we can prevail over him and take our revenge on him").

The first colon is interesting because of the appearance of the same verbs which Jeremiah uses to describe his struggle with God in vs. 7. Not only has God deceived him and overpowered him, but his enemies are looking for the same opportunity. Holladay says,

> Jeremiah is in a hall of mirrors: God should not deceive, but has; the mockers want him to be deceived, but he already has been; God should not overcome his own prophet, but has; Jeremiah wants to overcome the word, but cannot; the mockers want to overcome him, but need not try. Nothing is right, all is a-jangle. 153

The line serves as a fitting conclusion to the complaint portion of the passage, highlighting Jeremiah's dilemma arising from his vocation. While God had promised the prophet that he would be "a wall" against his persecutors, Jeremiah's experience had been that God was walling him in on one side and prohibiting his escape from his calling, while his enemies were coming at him from the other direction seeking to destroy him.

Caught as he was, Jeremiah could only appeal to the higher power and greater authority in his life. His affirmation of God at the beginning of vs. 11 is strangely appropriate, not because it is altogether expected (some commentators like Duhm and Cornill have, in fact, questioned the authenticity of the verse because of the change of mood), but because of the vocabulary used. "But Yahweh is with me (וַיהוָה אוֹתִי)," Jeremiah says, "like a dread warrior (כְּגִבּוֹר עָרִיץ)." The adjective עָרִיץ is unusual in that it is not utilized in relation to God in the MT except

in this verse. Most frequently it connotes the ruthless power of individuals or nations (cf. Isa. xxv 3-5). In Jeremiah, it appears again only in xv 21, where it is a substantive describing those from whom God promises to rescue the prophet. In light of what precedes this colon, it is not unlikely that the prophet is expressing confidence which is tempered by ambiguity. God is a warrior capable of winning of the battle, but there is also something about his dealings which appears mysteriously dreadful to the prophet. God's aid to Jeremiah against their mutual enemies is a great gift, but God's relationship with the prophet still carries an uncomfortable edge. God is not tame; he is not predictable within the confines of certain orthodox expectations.[154]

The rest of the verse indicates the fate that Jeremiah in faith anticipates for his enemies. "Therefore my persecutors will stumble (יִכָּשְׁלוּ ; cf. vi 15; viii 12; xxxi 9) and they will not triumph (יְכָלוּ ; cf. xx 7, 10); they will be utterly shamed, because they failed (lit.: "did not succeed")[155]--the eternal disgrace will not be forgotten." God had triumphed over the prophet in the past and in the present. And he would likely triumph again. But at least Jeremiah's adversaries would not be able to triumph.

Verse 12 with some variations is repeated in xi 20. Against the view of many, it seems more likely that the verse was original in this context, if for no other reason than the fact that it is a part of a poetic section, whereas

in chapt. xi, it stands in the midst of an otherwise prose passage.[156] The content is also congruent with vs. 11. Jeremiah was sure that God would prevail over his enemies, because he was the "dreadful warrior." In this verse, he affirms Yahweh as the "righteous assayer," and pleads with him to scrutinize his persecutors with the same thoroughness with which he has tested the prophet (cf. xii 3). Jeremiah was not content with the knowledge that his adversaries would go down to defeat. As far as he knew, his own "defeat" might also continue, either as an extension of his prophetic dilemma or in his identification with his people. What Jeremiah pleads for here is a differentiation between his enemies and himself. His case had been revealed, and he still felt that his cause was just. The verse is filled with legal terminology (cf. my comments on xi 20), and it is this characteristic which seems most out of place with the rest of the section. Nevertheless, as in other contexts where Jeremiah talks about his persecutors collecting evidence against him (cf. vs. 10; xviii 18), the presentation of his own case seems justified.

Verse 13 concludes the section with a high note of praise. The enormous shift in mood from vs. 7 to vs. 13 along with the change in speaker (from first person to third person), makes this verse suspect as a secondary addition to the lament. Scholarly opinion is divided between those who take it as secondary (Duhm, Cornill, Skinner, Volz, etc.) and those who accept it as genuine (Baumgartner, Rudolph,

Bright, etc.). It is my view that it should not be too quickly dismissed as secondary for the following reasons. First, the language is distinctly Jeremianic. The phrase מִיַּד מְרֵעִים ("from the hand/clutch/power of the wicked") occurs in xv 21 (Yahweh's response to a confession), xxi 12, and xxiii 14, all of which are poetic passages. In addition the correlative verb, הִצִּיל , also appears in xxiii 14, but the combination is found nowhere else in the OT.[157] Second, changes in speaker and mood are not uncommon in Jeremiah, even in passages which otherwise exhibit great coherence. Similarly, it is not uncommon for laments elsewhere to conclude on a note of confidence and praise (cf. Ps. vi 9-10; xxxv 9-10, 28; xxii 22-25). Third, there is no satisfactory reason why this burst of joy (which must be considered as authentically Jeremianic) should have been added here except by the prophet himself. Elsewhere the editor(s) did not feel constrained to conclude his laments with doxology (cf. xviii 18-23). Furthermore, the logical position for an editorial addition of this type would have been the conclusion of the chapter, since the only reason for such an addition would be to dilute the stridency of the lament. The suddenness of the emotional shift in tone in this position is not the mark of a skillful editor.

If the verse is taken as authentic to this context, the meaning is still somewhat difficult. Holladay is baffled by it, saying that it could be 1) a later insertion of a genuine Jeremianic word, 2) a continuation of vs. 12 (in the

manner of Ps. xxii 20-24), 3) an ironic statement, 4) an hysterical outburst, or 5) a sarcastic comment.[158] None of the last three options seems likely, although the first two are both possibilities. Jeremiah could have added vs. 13 as a genuine postscript to this struggle once some resolution had come. In this case, the entire section can be viewed as a witness both to the internal, vocational struggle and to the faithfulness of God to continue to be with the prophet even as Yahweh had promised (cf. i 19; xv 20, 21). It is also possible that, even in the midst of his outburst of frustration, Jeremiah experienced a renewed confidence. In another context, Holladay says: "The barriers to our understanding of his words and thoughts may lie not so much an any mangled text . . . but in the short-sighted insistence that Jeremiah's mode of expression conform to our more pedestrian expectations."[159] Chambers adds: "The sudden shifts of mood often noted in Jeremiah should warn us to be willing, often, to change our landscape of thought as we follow the shifting moods of the prophet."[160]

When Jeremiah affirms that God "rescues the life of the needy (אֶבְיוֹן) from the hand of the wicked," he is referring to himself and to those who undergo the agony of soul which he had faced. He was needy in his understanding of the mysterious purposes for which God had grasped him; he was needy in his emotional perseverance; he was needy for protection from his enemies. He was, in short, dependent upon God for his sustenance as a prophet. But he did not

have adequate vocational models in the prophetic orthodoxy of the day to provide an understanding of the manner in which God's provision might come. So he could only express honestly the agony and ambiguity which he felt, and delight in those moments when new light came, even when it was sufficient only for the moment and might soon fade in the face of another episode of despair.

Jeremiah xx 14-18

And despair came. There is no other passage which records such depth of prophetic anguish as is expressed by Jeremiah in xx 14-18. There is not a ray of hope here, except perhaps in the fact that Jeremiah had the freedom to express himself in these terms.

Unlike the other "confessions," this section is not in the form of prayer.[161] God is not addressed directly, except perhaps in the concluding question of vs. 18. Rather it is a self-curse which resonates with expressions like Job 3.[162] In its original context, the passage may have served as "a conventional utterance of distress accompanying a woe-oracle."[163] Coming as it does in its present location, it serves as a sequel to vss. 7-13, reversing the confident note of vs. 13, and casting a final shadow of despair over the entire chapter.

Key to the interpretation of the passage is understanding that for Jeremiah to curse the day of his birth is not merely to express futility in his existence, but also to

question the place of providence in his life and the essential nature of his vocation.[164] Once before (xv 10), Jeremiah had lamented his birth ("Woe to me, my mother, that you bore me!"), connecting it with his subsequent role as a prophet ("a man of strife and contention to all the land"). In Jer. xx 18, this same motivation is clear: לָמָּה זֶּה מֵרֶחֶם יָצָאתִי לִרְאוֹת עָמָל וְיָגוֹן וְיִכְלוּ בּוּשֶׁת יָמָי ("Why did I come forth from this womb to see trouble and sorrow, and that my days should end in shame?").[165] Jeremiah consciously employed terminology drawn from the call narrative (the verb יצא with מרחם ; cf. Jer. i 5). Furthermore, the use of יגון (which is elsewhere specifically connected with sorrow and mourning; cf. xxxi 13; Ps, xiii 3; Isa. xxxv 10; etc.) is reminiscent of viii 18, where the prophet utilized the word to describe his grief associated with his vision of the people's impending devastation and captivity. The anguish of life in Jeremiah's view was that he had been called to be a prophet before his birth. He had no real choice in the matter, and his obedience to God's call had brought him only distress and anguish. His experience of vocation was far from that of his counterparts who spoke the word of "peace" and were apparently held in esteem by the people. Yet the compulsion of God's word was undeniable. It burned within him. He suffered from the heat when he tried to contain the oracles, and he suffered from the cold hatred of the people when he delivered them. The futility of the life of the prophet, lived in the providence of God, was overwhelming.

It should be noted, that there is no hint that his life could have meaning because of some vicarious suffering on behalf of the people. He suffered because of them and he suffered with them. But he had no awareness of suffering for them. Thus, his agony seemed to have little purpose, and life devoid of purpose is always a seedbed of despair.

The verses themselves are fairly straightforward. The passage opens with אָרוּר הַיּוֹם אֲשֶׁר יֻלַּדְתִּי בּוֹ ("Cursed be the day when I was born"). Because it was a capital offense to curse either God or parents (Lev. xxiv 10-16; xx 9), Jeremiah expressed his curse as against the day of his birth and against the one who delivered the news to his father (vss. 15, 16). For his parents, this represented a blessed occasion (vs. 14b), because he was a male child who could carry on the family line (vs. 15b). But God's greater purpose for his life counteracted these normal expectations. His calling was found eventually to include God's command that he should not marry as a sign to the people, and, hence, never be able to perpetuate his lineage. Not only his own well-being, but also the hopes his parents would be shattered.

The ancient versions read the verbs in vs. 16 as jussives ("let him be . . .let him hear") and many emend the MT accordingly (יְהִי for וְהָיָה ; יִשְׁמַע for וְשָׁמַע).[166] But the verse is also clear as a statement of fact ("he will be . . . he will hear"), followed by the explanation in vs. 17 that, since the messenger did not destroy Jeremiah, he would

in turn be destroyed.[167] Some commentators further emend the beginning of vs. 16 to "may that day be like . . ." (יְהִי כַּיּוֹם הַהוּא), on the basis that it seems pointless to curse a man so harshly for such an incidental role.[168] Kimchi suggests that Jeremiah knew that the messenger had been none other than Pashhur, but this is a fanciful explanation. It is more likely that the cursing of the messenger simply represents a literary convention.

In vs. 17, Jeremiah expresses his gruesome desire that he had been slain in his mother's womb and that her body had become his grave. The LXX and Pesh. read ברחם ("in the womb") for מֵרֶחֶם . Indeed the word in the MT may have been miscopied from the next verse.[169] Dahood's suggestion, however, that the word be revocalized as מְרָחֵם ("enwombed"), requires no emendation of the consonantal text (cf. Targ. and Vulg. which reflects the MT).[170]

Jeremiah received no answer which he recorded to his question "why?". Nevertheless, in spite of his despair, he somehow went on. The motivation of God's word from within, as well as God's faithful support which had been promised him but was not always evident to him, no doubt pushed him on. Even the opportunity to express his despair may have helped him to persevere. The lonely mystery of his vocation would continue to unfold and he would continue to grow in appreciation and understanding of what it was, rather than fighting against what he had expected it to be.

The Self-Disclosures Summarized

While the self-disclosures of Jeremiah vary greatly in their form and content, the singular thread which runs through them all is the suffering of the prophet. Occasionally, verses appear which reflect experiences of praise and affirmation of faith, but even these are in the context of dialogues expressing agony and doubt. It is no wonder that Jeremiah has often been characterized as a morose, and even self-pitying individual. But a careful reading of the text does not justify this view. It was not Jeremiah's intent in the self-disclosures simply to bare his soul and to record the personal disquietude of his psychological nature. Rather, his expressions of agony were a realistic attempt to deal with the nature of his vocation, which he came to perceive in far different terms than the prophetic orthodoxy of his day projected.

The suffering of the prophet was attached to a number of different sources. These include at least the following:[171]

1. Proleptic visions of the utter destruction of the land (iv 19b-20a; iv 23-26; viii 19-20; x 19; etc.).

2. Awareness of the extent of the people's sin and their accompanying obduracy (v 1-9; vi 9-11; etc.).

3. The burden of speaking oracles of doom (vi 11; xv 10, 17; xx 8; etc.).

4. The futility of his assignment to proclaim warning to those who will not listen (vi 9-11). The impossibility of measuring the signficance of a vocation in light of certain, expected results.

5. Experience of the pathos of God (viii 23-ix 1; etc.).

6. Strong identification with his own people who will undergo destruction (iv 20b; x 20; viii 21; etc.). This is illustrated not only in the fact that he includes expressions of pain at his own personal loss, but also by his utilization of the same vocabulary to describe his brokenness and that of the people.

7. Denial of the role of intercession for the peace of the people (xi 14; xv 1; etc.). Jeremiah is permitted only to intercede for judgment and to serve as the messenger of woe (xvii 18; xviii 21-23; etc.).

8. Forbidden the normal social support of companionship and family (xv 17; xvi 1-9; etc.). The denial of personal desires. Social ostracism.

9. Knowing that he speaks the truth, but an inability to convince others and to validate his message, which was in conflict with the "shalom" prophets (xx 8-10; etc.).

10. Persecution, including plots against his life, from leaders, fellow "prophets," and even his kinsmen (xi 18f.; xii 6; xvii 18; xviii 19f.; etc.).

11. Inability to extricate himself from the irresistable will of God (xx 7-9, 11; etc.).

12. Caught between the issues of justice, as they affected both society and his personal life, and the longsuffering of God (xii 1-4; etc.).

13. Shattered by the sense of the absence and/or neutrality of God (xv 18; xvii 14-17; etc.).

14. Confusion/bewilderment concerning the nature and activity of God and the traditional tenets of Israel's faith (xv 16; xii 1-4; etc.).

In each case, the suffering is a result of some aspect of the prophetic vocation, either as Jeremiah relates to the receipt of God's word, or as he deals with the consequences

of its proclamation. In a majority of cases, the expressions of agony may be seen as directly counter to the portrayal elsewhere in the book of the prophetic orthodoxy and expectations of the late 7th century B.C.

THE דבר יהוה IN JEREMIAH: A STRUGGLE FOR LEGITIMACY

Called to a vocation, the legitimacy of which was constantly questioned by the external derisions and contrary proclamations of fellow prophets and by the internal doubts generated as a result of the expectations which attended the prophetic orthodoxy of the culture, Jeremiah was faced with the challenge of determining a criterion for authenticating his prophetic activity.

His was not a new challenge. As early as the call of Moses (Exod. iv 1-9), prophets struggled with the question of what constituted legitimation. Possibilities included "signs" (Exod. iv), visions, "speaking in the name of Yahweh" (Deut. xviii 20), the realization of what was proclaimed (Deut. xviii 22), the spirit (II Kings ii 9), the transcendental experience of "standing in the council of Yahweh" (I Kings xxii 19f.; Jer. xxiii 18, 22; etc.), etc. But Jeremiah could not point to any criterion which was efficacious. There was none available with respect to the form of revelation or the content of the prophecy which was helpful to him, since the traditional forms and traditional content, which were utilized to great effect by the "shalom prophets," were already being employed to provide authentication for oracles which were distinctly contrary to

Jeremiah's own experience. "Just because Jahweh was not 'a God at hand,' but a God 'far off' (Jer. xxiii 23), there could be no standard method of any sort by which he granted revelation."[1]

The self-disclosures in Jeremiah reveal the tension of this search for authentication. Many times the purpose of the search was outward validation, trying to convince the deaf society to listen to this solitary voice of doom. But the quest was also within the prophet himself, as he struggled to apprehend the mystery of his own vocation, which stood in such contrast with what he had been given to expect. Jeremiah suffered in his struggle both to understand himself and to make himself understood. In the end, it was the "word of Yahweh" which became the central element of his understanding. The "word of Yahweh" was the definitive characteristic of his vocation, and, therefore, it was also the central issue contributing to his pain. In this study, I will examine the nature and content of God's word as it is described in Jeremiah, and the effect which its receipt and articulation had on his life.

The Nature of Yahweh's Word

דבר יהוה , as Mowinckel points out in his important article "The 'Spirit' and the 'Word' in the Pre-exilic Reforming Prophets", is the basic reality of prophetic consciousness rather than רוח יהוה which was apparently associated with the ecstatic manifestations of an earlier

period.[2] The "Spirit" is, in fact, wholly lacking in Jeremiah as in the vast majority of the pre-exilic classical prophets.[3] But whereas the Spirit was seen in other times as God's active force moving potently within the world, it is precisely the Word which takes this role in Jeremiah. Before we move on to a description of Jeremiah's interaction with the Word, let us explore more deeply some of the essential characteristics of the Word as it is conceived.

First, the word or words of God (the singular and plural seem to be used interchangeably) are seen as firmly originating in Yahweh himself. Humanistic presuppositions may lead commentators to the interpretation that what is described as דבר יהוה is phenomenologically only human words given the formulaic stamp of divine authority, but there is nothing within the material which would indicate that this was Jeremiah's view. He assumed that these words were of transcendent origin. They were recognized as such because of the nature of their transmission, the power of their declaration and action, the efficacy of the message, and the incommutable effect which they had on the lives which they touched. When the word came upon Jeremiah, it "happened" to him, it was placed within his mouth, and there was seemingly never a confusion between God's Word and his own. This is not to say that the prophet did not have any concept of his mediatory role or even of his literary role in the articulation of the transcendent word into human speech, but it does say that for him the source of the word was not in

question. There were times when Jeremiah had to wait for the word to come (Jer. xlii 1-7; xxviii 7f.) and times when it came upon him unbeckoned and unexpected.

A second characteristic of God's word is that he exercises control over it, filling it with power and shaping it to accomplish what was intended. In Jer. v 14 God responds to the peoples' intransigence by declaring to the prophet: "I will place my words in your mouth as a fire and it will consume these people as wood." (הִנֵּנִי נֹתֵן דְּבָרַי בְּפִיךָ לְאֵשׁ וְהָעָם הַזֶּה עֲצִים וַאֲכָלָתַם:) Even though God's words are clearly to be mediated through the mouth of the prophet, they nevertheless do not cease to be under God's ultimate control.

This brings us to a third characteristic, namely that God's words are thought to be substantial and their presence clearly manifest. This is the implication of the derisive comment made by the people in v 12,13. The people say that God will do nothing and that they will not be harmed. In verse 13 they state: "The prophets are but wind (רוח) and the word is not in them."[4] This either means that the prophets are only talking and do not possess any substantial way to back up their words, or that the prophets are only full of "spirit," that is ecstasy, which is likewise without substance. In either case it is the "word" which is thought to possess power. The people's mistake is in their failure to recognize the "word" and, thus, in verse 14 God promises to make it eminently clear. In xxiii 29 God asks the

question: "Is not my word like fire and like a hammer which breaks a rock in pieces?" In this case the comparison is not between the word and wind, but the word and a dream (cf. vs. 28). The dream is insubstantial and fleeting, but the nature of the word is quite different. The two may be compared to straw and grain, the former is valueless, insubstantial, and capable of being blown about or influenced by any slight breeze, while the latter valuable, substantial, and obviously of a recognizable nature.

Fourth, God's word is rational as well as revelatory. It does not consist only of action or power, but of concepts, propositions, and commands which may be understood readily. It does not manifiest itself in riddles or cryptic abstractions, but in commands, warnings, promises, and proleptic visions which may be articulated in such a way that the meaning is evident and the required response is straightforward. Even where symbols are employed to convey the word, these receive careful explanation (cf. i 11-16; xviii 1-10; etc.). The fact that various introductory formulae referring specifically to the receipt of God's word appear over 60 times in Jeremiah, is an indication that the word was perceived as revelatory. Through the word, the prophet, and eventually the people as the word was proclaimed, came to know something of the mind of God and of his activity among men. God's word in its content was always connected with God's character and, thus, it was a word of strong moral and ethical dimensions. This is quite

different from a spell or incantation which may possess power but lacks a semantic content consistent with God's nature.

Fifth, God's word is reliable and efficacious since God stands behind it to fulfill that which he has revealed. Repeatedly there are reminders that God's word is not communication apart from action, but that it includes both of these aspects. In i 12 the symbol of the almond branch is interpreted as God's vigilance over his word, assuring the prophet that it will be fulfilled at the right time. The promise of fulfillment is attached both to the words of woe (cf. xxxix 16) and to the words of hope (cf. xxix 10; xxxiii 14) and instances of fulfillment are often specially noted (cf. xxxii 8). The efficacy and immutability of God's word, in comparison with that of the people, is dramatically proclaimed to the exiles living in Egypt in Jer. xliv 24-30. In verse 27, the prophet speaking for God declares: "For I am watching over them for harm, not for good" (הִנֵּנִי שֹׁקֵד עֲלֵיהֶם לְרָעָה וְלֹא לְטוֹבָה). The use of the verb שׁקד here echoes i 12. All will be destroyed, says Yahweh, and "then the whole remnant of Judah who came to live in Egypt will know whose word will stand--mine or theirs (דְּבַר-מִי יָקוּם מִמֶּנִּי וּמֵהֶם)." Furthermore, God even offers a sign, the fulfillment of which is to convince the people that God is not impotent (vss. 29,30).

The final example of the efficacy of God's word, or perhaps more correctly its compelling power, occurs in the

life of the prophet himself. In xx 9, Jeremiah, burdened by the abuse which his possession of God's word has brought upon him, decides that he will no longer externalize the word which God has given him. But the result is that the word "becomes in my heart like a burning fire, shut up in my bones. I am weary holding it in. . . ." (וְהָיָה בְלִבִּי כְּאֵשׁ בְּעֻצְּרֹת עָצֵר בְּעַצְמֹתָי וְנִלְאֵיתִי כַּלְכֵּל). God's word is not able to be quenched or contained, but it will always achieve the purpose for which it is sent (cf. Is. lv 10,11).

As may be noted in the various examples already given, and in the varied characteristics attached to God's word as pictured in Jeremiah, דבר יהוה at times seems to refer to specific verbal constructions. But the concept includes far more. The word of God has a substantial and powerful existence of its own quite apart from articulated speech. That existence stands even apart from the prophet himself who is the vehicle through which the articulated dimension comes. But the word never has an independent existence apart from God. It originates in him and is controled by him; its presence in any given situation assumes God's presence there; its content always reflects God's activity. Thus as we discuss God's word in relation to Jeremiah and others, in some way we are speaking of the relationship of God himself with those people.

The Word and the Prophets

The word of God in Jeremiah is mediated to the people

fundamentally through the prophet. Indeed, the prophetic vocation is defined in terms of the word. Jeremiah xviii 18 provides an indication that this was a part of the essential expectation of the people as they related to those designated as prophets. The functions of priest, sage, and prophet are suggested by single word descriptions. From the priest comes תּוֹרָה (instruction), from the sage comes עֵצָה (counsel) and from the prophet comes דָּבָר (word). Zedekiah demonstrates this expectation in Jer. xxxvii 17 when he secretly summons Jeremiah and asks him: "Is there a word from the Lord?" (הֲיֵשׁ דָּבָר מֵאֵת יהוה). As a central part of Jeremiah's call, God is pictured as placing his words in the mouth of the prophet as an essential element in his vocational equipment (i 9 -- הִנֵּה נָתַתִּי דְבָרַי בְּפִיךָ).

Jer. xxiii 28 (cf. vss. 26-29) indicates that the prophets in Jeremiah's day also made authoritative claims on the basis of their dreams (חֲלוֹם), as well as their possession of the "word," but these are summarily disregarded by Jeremiah as having neither value nor power in comparison with the word. But, unfortunately, there was no readily usable test to distinguish the true word from the false. The messages which the prophets uttered from the "visions of their own minds" (xxiii 16 - לֹא מִפִּי . . . חֲזוֹן לִבָּם יהוה) , or from their own word (xxiii 36), or even from words stolen from each other (xxiii 30), often possessed the same style, the same ring of authority, and the same introductory formulae (xxiii 38) as Jeremiah's messages.

Furthermore, the false prophets often spoke the kinds of messages to which the people had a greater propensity to listen and the kinds of messages which had previous historical prophetic precedence (Isaiah had proclaimed peace for Jerusalem as a true word over 100 years earlier).

Jeremiah's attempts at dissuading the people from heeding the false prophets raises some interesting points about his concept of the word of God in relation to the prophets. First, the word of God is transmitted to the prophet in a personal encounter. Jeremiah twice indicates in an oracle against false prophets that receipt of God's word comes through standing in God's council/counsel. Jer. xxiii 18 reads: כִּי מִי עָמַד בְּסוֹד יהוה וַיֵּרֶא וְיִשְׁמַע אֶת-דְּבָרוֹ מִי-הִקְשִׁיב דְּבָרִי וַיִּשְׁמָע. Jeremiah may be employing the idea-complex of the court or council of Yahweh here or he may simply be indicating that the true prophet is the one who possesses a privileged relationship with Yahweh and therefore is privy to special information.[5] In either case, however, the question is asked in such a way that there is only one answer, namely Jeremiah himself. He is the one who has seen and heard God's word and has paid careful attention to it. Note that the word of God is both seen and heard suggesting a visionary experience.[6] This is not surpising given the substantive nature of the word as noted above and the various visual experiences through which the word was communicated at times to the prophet. But it also suggests that the criticism which Jeremiah levels against the false

prophets who tell each other dreams (xxiii 25-29) is not that he denies that revelation can come through these means, but rather that dreams (and even visions) do not necessarily contain God's word. They may be delusions of the mind (vs. 26).[7] Receipt of God's word, on the other had, comes because the prophet enjoys a unique, personal relationship with God and gives special attention to what God communicates to him.

Second, when the word of God comes to the prophet its content sets the prophet against those who despise God's ways. The word of God identifies the prophet with God's moral and ethical concerns and the fulfillment of the demands of the Covenant. This is the implication of Jer. xxiii 17. The false prophets offer a word of peace and encouragement to those who "despise" God (לְמְנַאֲצַי) and to "each who walks in the stubbornness of his heart" (וְכֹל הֹלֵךְ בִּשְׁרִרוּת לִבּוֹ). They do not seem concerned with the evil ways and deeds of the people (xxiii 22), but rather are more interested in the preservation of a political/cultural peace and, perhaps the protection of their own status quo. In no way is this the mark of the word of God on a prophet. Jeremiah's own experience (which we will examine in detail below) proved this. When he received God's word he became a "man of strife and disputation to the whole land" (xv 10); he was filled with prophecies of doom (as explained elsewhere, this is the meaning of עוֹל in xv 17) and, hence, became isolated from the merrymakers of his society (xv 17).

Furthermore, prophecies of peace are always to be suspect. In Jeremiah's confrontation with Hananiah in chapt. xxviii, this is made clear. When Hananiah delivered a message of hope and encouragement in the Temple in the face of Jeremiah's portrayal of bondage, Jeremiah's response was essentially: "I hope you are right!" (cf. vs. 6). Nevertheless, he went on, "From early times the prophets who were before me and you prophesied against many countries and against great nations war, disaster, and plague. But the prophet who prophesies peace will be known as truly sent by Yahweh when the word of prophecy comes true." This is quite consistent with the skepticism with which Jeremiah views the prophecies of peace elsewhere (as in xxiii 17; viii 11; etc.). The implication of such statements is not that a word of peace or hope is never legitimate, but rather that it is usually not helpful in bringing God's people into a more consistent obedience to him. When it allows a specifically disobedient people to persist in their disobedience without being challenged and called to repentance, the word of peace does not accomplish God's intent. Because a word of peace always reinforces the status quo, it is usually less helpful in encouraging covenant obedience and is, therefore, generally suspect.

Third, the possession of God's word authorizes the prophet to intercede on behalf of the people. In Jer. xxvii 16ff., Jeremiah contradicts those prophets who are predicting that the first wave of exiles to Babylon and the

confiscation of the implements of the Temple is only a brief set-back. Vs. 18 records his challenge: "If they are prophets and have the word of Yahweh, let them plead with the Lord of Hosts . . ." (וְאִם-נְבִיאִים הֵם וְאִם-יֵשׁ דְּבַר-יהוה אִתָּם יִפְגְּעוּ-נָא בַּיהוה צְבָאוֹת). It is true that Jeremiah on several occasions is told to end his intercession (as in vii 16), but in these cases it is because God's decision is made and will not be altered. The true prophet still has a right to approach God, especially to plead in support of a word from God. This fact is likely at the root of Jeremiah's own pleas that God actualize his word and vindicate himself and his prophet (as in xvii 14ff.).

Thus we may summarize by saying that possession of the word of Yahweh is consistently understood in Jeremiah as the essential characteristic of the true prophet. That this is so is shown particularly in Jeremiah's attempt to develop the point as a major weapon in his battle to expose the false prophets and to vindicate the truth of his own proclamation. The word of God came through a personal encounter between the prophet and the transcendent God and it brought with it the right to intercede with God as well as the responsibility to declare the content of the word to the people. The content of God's word was linked inextricably to God's character and the intention of its demands was always a closer obedience to God's law.

Jeremiah's Receipt of God's Word

The exact nature of the communication between God and prophet, whereby the word was transmitted, can never be ascertained. To a great degree any communication between man and the Transcendent must be inaccessible to phenomenological analysis. This is true both because such communication defies description and because, in the case of the biblical materials, the writers are not nearly so concerned with how it happens as with the fact that it does happen and that there are subsequent results. The Book of Jeremiah is slightly more suggestive about the receipt of the word of God than elsewhere, largely because of the central role of the concept of "the word," and because of the unique corpus of prophetic self-disclosure which the book contains. Still there is no unified imagery or careful description of the phenomenon, but only several diverse, suggestive phrases.

I. The first such statement occurs in i 9 in the context of the call narrative. This verse is dealt with at length elsewhere. But by way of summary, it is helpful to review those conclusions. The verse reads: "And God sent forth his hand and he touched my mouth. And Yahweh said to me, 'Behold I have put my words in your mouth.'" While Jeremiah's vocation was established before his creation, as is reflected in Jer. i 5, the special gifts which would make the practice of his vocation possible were still lacking. In this verse God provides the prophet with his words. They are described as coming through a special intervention by

God, and they have a substantive reality of their own. God's words do not seem to come to the prophet through a slow reasoning process, but they are suddenly to be found in his mouth ready for articulation. The description is designed to highlight the fact that the words do not originate in the prophet's own reasonings, imaginings, or dreams, as did the words spoken by the false prophets (cf. Jer. xxiii 16, 21). Rather, Jeremiah perceives that the words, for which he will be the messenger have a concrete, tangible reality originating in God.

II. The second statement in which the prophet comments on his receipt of God's words comes in xv 16a in the context of one of Jeremiah's complaints concerning the persecution which he faced. The MT reads: נִמְצְאוּ דְבָרֶיךָ וָאֹכְלֵם , which has been variously translated and interpreted. LXX renders the phrase as a continuation of the previous verse, thus reading: γνῶθι ὡς ἔλαβον περὶ σοῦ ὀνειδισμὸν ὑπὸ τῶν ἀθετούντων τοὺς λόγους σον. συντέλεσον αὐτούς. . ("Know that I have taken reproach for you from those who despise your words. Consume them!"). This suggests a Hebrew Vorlage: . . . כַּלֵּם. . . דַּע שְׂאֵתִי עָלֶיךָ חֶרְפָּה מִנִּאֲצֵי דְבָרֶיךָ:[8] Skinner emends the text on the basis of LXX and Hyatt also accepts the possibility that LXX reflects the original, since it is consonant with Jeremiah's thought.[9] But the emendation is certainly not necessary to make sense of the phrase, and, thus, there is little to recommend the LXX as the superior reading.[10] The ancient versions, along with Aquila and

Symmachus, all follow the MT, though both the Targ. and Pesh. render it rather freely as we shall see.

Following the MT then, how is the phrase to be understood? Several possibilities present themselves. Holladay links the passage with the discovery of the scroll in the Temple in 621 B.C. on the basis of the similarity of the vocabulary here and in II Kings xxii 13 and xxiii 2 (and II Chron. xix 3).[11] "Your words were found" thus describes an event apart from Jeremiah's immediate personal experience. The phrase "and I ate them" suggests that, although the scroll was discovered by someone else, the prophet internalized its message. Holladay links this latter event with i 9, and goes on to propound the view that Jeremiah's acceptance of his call should be dated after the Josianic reform, probably just after Josiah's death.[12] The major difficulty with Holladay's argument is that he bases too much on too little. First, the link which he draws between this verse and II Kings xxii 13 and xxiii 2 is tenuous at best. As Holladay himself notes, דברי (plural) is not used alone in the II Kings passages but in construct relationships with הַסֵּפֶר in the first instance and with סֵפֶר הַתּוֹרָה in the second instance. The designations are quite specific, and there is no indication that the book which was found came to be commonly called דְּבָרִים. Rather, it would seem likely that it was known as "The Book of the Covenant." Furthermore, Holladay states that the passages in II Kings are the only places where מצא and

דבר are linked.[13] This is not true, as Berridge points out in citing Amos viii 12.[14] But even if it were true, such a link between two very common roots would be inconclusive. Second, the relationship which Holladay assumes between xv 16 and i 9 is not at all certain. While both passages do contain a sort of "oral" imagery (God placing his words in Jeremiah's mouth in i 9 and Jeremiah "eating" the words in xv 16), the use of the imagery is otherwise quite different. In i 9, the figure is not one of eating, but rather of articulation. God is responding to the prophet's lack of complete preparation for the exercise of his role by supplying him with a message. In xv 16, the statement "I ate them" is the prophet's affirmation that he accepted God's words. It contains neither any idea of articulation nor any indication that this acceptance occurred only at the time of his call. The two verses are quite separate in intent and content.[15]

Another common way of interpreting xv 16a is to view it as a reference to Jeremiah's acceptance of the words of former prophets.[16] Berridge supports this view by drawing attention to Amos viii 12, which states that there will come a time when "men will stagger from sea to sea and wander from north to east, to search for the word of Yahweh (לְבַקֵּשׁ אֶת-דְּבַר-יהוה); but they will not find it (וְלֹא יִמְצָאוּ)." The key to Berridge's argument is the fact that מצא "clearly relates here to an indirect reception of a Divine word," rather than to direct revelation.[17] On the analogy

of Amos viii 12, he suggests that Jer. xv 16a also uses to indicate a word from Yahweh previously mediated through someone else. However, in order to draw this conclusion, Berridge must assume that מצא has a rather special meaning in relation to the word in Amos viii 12. But this does not seem to be the case. Rather than a unique relationship to דבר , it is merely used as a complementary verb with בקש . What is sought will not be found. There is no evidence that Jeremiah ever sought the words of Yahweh in any other way except through direct revelation. In fact he rarely sought Yahweh's word at all. Generally the word came upon him powerfully and unsought. But this brings us to another crucial point for Berridge. מצא in xv 16a, he notes, is in the Niphal form, and Jeremiah would not have been likely to use an impersonal passive if he were referring to the direct and "overpowering reality of Yahweh's personal revelations to him."[18] Here I would agree with Berridge. The passive construction is weak. But as I will presently demonstrate, it may be entirely appropriate here, though not as an expression which intends to focus on the provenance of his revelation. Finally, Berridge supports his argument by appealing to Ezek. ii 8 - iii 3, the passage in which Ezekiel is commanded: (iii 1, 2) "'Son of man, what you find, eat (אֵת אֲשֶׁר-תִּמְצָא אֱכוֹל); eat this scroll (אֱכוֹל אֶת-הַמְּגִלָּה הַזֹּאת); and go to speak to the house of Israel.' So I opened my mouth, and he gave me the scroll to eat." LXX does not include the phrase אֵת אֲשֶׁר-תִּמְצָא אֱכוֹל , which leads

to the suggestion that it was added by a glossator with Jer. xv 16 in mind, thus establishing an early exegetical link between the passages.[19] Since the "bookroll eaten by Ezekiel undoubtedly contained the words of the former prophets," argues Berridge, "it is clear that they [the glossators] had already interpreted the phrase there [xv 16] as referring to existing prophetic words, and not to the reception of new words."[20] Berridge's reasoning is not convincing. Beginning with the reference to the Ezekiel passage, it is not at all clear that the roll eaten by Ezekiel "undoubtedly contained the words of former prophets," an assumption which controls Berridge's exegesis of this text. And even if the scroll was full of former prophetic literature, Berridge does not seem to recognize that the context of Ezekiel's action is precisely that of a direct revelation. Ezekiel is not merely "discovering" these words, but rather they are given to him by God. Furthermore, the fact that the crucial phrase in Ezek. iii 1, which contains both מצא and אכל , is a possible gloss suggests only that a glossator perhaps saw a link between the two passages. It does not necessarily imply that there was an actual connection between the passages nor that the glossator understood either passage as referring to existing prophetic words. A final argument supporting this interpretation could revolve around the plural form of דבר in this verse.[21] Here one might attempt to distinguish between the divine "word" and the "words" of literary articulation which spring from the

word. Kimchi, in fact, clearly makes this distinction in commenting on his acceptance of the Qᵉrê (דבר) to agree with the singular form of the verb (וַיְהִי). He says that the plural refers to particular words, while the singular refers to the divine word in general. This distinction, however, is not so carefully drawn in Jeremiah. Jer. i 9 refers to God placing his "words" in Jeremiah's mouth, a figure referring to the prophet's endowment with a message, but certainly not referring to a literary formulation. Thus it seems unlikely that this passage is a reference to Jeremiah's acceptance of the proclamations of former prophets.

A third, and more traditional view, is that Jeremiah is simply testifying to his ready reception of direct revelations received earlier in his career. Rudolph supports this interpretation, over against the thesis that xv 16 refers to earlier literary words, by directing attention to the use of מצא in Lam. ii 9, which describes the physical and societal collapse of Jerusalem.[22] Not only are the gates and walls destroyed and the king and officials exiled, but "her prophets no longer "find" visions from the Lord" (גַּם-נְבִיאֶיהָ לֹא-מָצְאוּ חָזוֹן מֵיהוָה). It is quite true that מצא is a Qal here, rather than a Niphal as in Jer. xv 16a, and that the reference is probably to cultic prophets.[23] However, what is demonstrated in this verse is a very general use of מצא as a verb which can be employed to indicate direct receipt of revelation. It does not

necessarily have the meaning "to find" as if to say that the prophets will no longer "discover" a vision, but it simply suggests that they will no longer "encounter" or "experience" visions. מצא may thus be regarded as having a rather stative meaning, denoting the condition of being present. Jer. v 26 states that "wicked men are among my people" (כִּי-נִמְצְאוּ בְעַמִּי רְשָׁעִים). The phrase does not mean that the wicked are sought and discovered, but rather that they are just there. (Similarly Jer. ii 34; xi 9; etc.) I would suggest that this is the meaning of Jer. xv 16a as well. Jeremiah is not making a point about the receipt of the words of God, but rather about his response to the words when they are encountered. I would translate the phrase: "Your words were there and I ate them" or "When your words came I ate them."[24] I would suggest that this manner of expression was chosen precisely so that the emphasis of the verse would be on the prophet's response and not on the manner by which the words came. Afterall, this is the point of the prophet's argument in the whole passage. He is under great tension and he wants vindication. In setting forth his case before God he must rehearse those facts which prove him righteous. He emphasizes that he bore scorn for God's sake (vs. 15), that he internalized the words when they came and responded positively to them (vs. 16), and that he did not sit with the merrymakers (vs. 17).

This interpretation, which withdraws emphasis from the process of receiving God's word, but highlights the

prophet's response of obedience, is supported by both the Targ. and medieval Jewish commentators. The Targ. translates the line as: קַבֵּילִית לְפִתְגָמָךְ וְקַיֵּימִתִּינוּן ("I received your words and I fulfilled them").[25] Clearly מצא is read with a wider meaning here. The more common verb in Aramaic which is generally used for translating מצא is שכח, but it is shunned here in preference to a verb expressing general reception.[26] Although Rashi does not specifically comment on the first phrase, he makes it evident that this is a reception of fresh words from God by interpreting the joy which the prophet feels as encouragement that the people may now listen to him. Evidently Rashi does not see וַתִּמָּצֵאנָה דְבָרֶיךָ as a particularly unusual expression for the receipt of God's words by a prophet. Kimchi, likewise, focuses his primary attention on the desirability of the words, but he begins his comment with כשנמצאו לי דבריך בנבואה קבלתיה ברצון ("When your words came to me in a prophecy, I accepted it with eagerness . . .") which indicates that he also understood this to refer to the prophet's experience of direct encounter with the divine word.

If Jer. xv 16 does not reveal much about the process of the prophet's actual receipt of God's word (since it is not Jeremiah's intention to do so in this context), what can be learned about the prophet's reception of the word is the effect which it had on him. Jer. xv 16b reads וַיְהִי דְבָרְךָ לִי לָשׂוֹן וּלְשִׂמְחַת לִבִּי ("And your word[reading with the K^{e}rê and the ancient versions] became to me as a joy and

gladness to my heart"). The key imagery here is לְשָׂשׂוֹן וּלְשִׂמְחַת , which is a combination of words appearing thirteen times altogether in the Old Testament and five times in Jeremiah (Jer. xvi 9; vii 34; xxv 10; xxxiii 11).[27] Elsewhere in Jeremiah, it is always connected with the joy of weddings (the typical phrase is קוֹל שָׂשׂוֹן וְקוֹל שִׂמְחָה קוֹל חָתָן וְקוֹל כַּלָּה -- "the sounds of joy and gladness, the voices of bride and bridegroom") and the whole figure is used to represent social stability in a time of peace. Jer. xvi 8, 9 is typical. Yahweh instructs Jeremiah not to enter into a house where there is feasting (בֵּית-מִשְׁתֶּה in vs 8) because of a wedding (vs. 9), inasmuch as Yahweh will soon bring it all to an end. The land will become desolate of family life or the maintenance of work (xxv 10). Wedding feasts ("joy and gladness") are possible only where the social structures are stable and people have the security to enter into all the preparations and celebrations which are involved. On the basis of the repetition of this phrase in the context of marriage elsewhere in Jeremiah, Holladay suggests that the joys of marriage may be indirectly indicated in xv 16.[28] He proposes that the call to serve "became in Jeremiah's mind a marriage substitute."[29] The suggestion is a creative one, but pushes beyond the bounds of what the relationship between this passage and other similar phrases in Jeremiah require. Berridge also rejects Holladay's view and sees the phrase as "probably rooted in the cultic thanksgiving rites."[30] This suggestion is also rather conjectural and

not clearly supported by an examination of the appearance of the phrase elsewhere in the OT. It is more likely that the image is used here simply to suggest that there is a certain deep joy to be experienced in connection with the prophetic vocation even in the midst of suffering. While the expressions of normal sociableness are denied the prophet because of his vocation (he neither sat with the merrymakers nor attended events of joy), he nevertheless knew something of that joy because of what God had given him. This is not unlike the tension which Ezekiel expresses in Ezek. iii 3, when he describes the scroll which he was commanded to eat as being "sweet as honey in my mouth" and yet creating a "bitterness and anger in my spirit" (vs. 14). Jeremiah chooses words which will highlight the tension between loneliness or anguish and joy. Both of these emotions are part of the reality of his vocation.

III. A third phrase which gives us some indication of the nature of Jeremiah's communication with God is found in Jer. xxiii 18, 21, which we have already discussed. What is apparent from these verses is that Jeremiah perceived that God's word came to him only because he enjoyed a unique and personal relationship with God. Jeremiah defined his receipt of God's word as coming because he "stood in the council/counsel of Yahweh."

To summarize, Jeremiah describes his receipt of God's word(s) as a result of an intensely personal encounter with God. The word which comes to him clearly originates with

God and possesses a concrete, tangible reality. The prophet's acceptance or internalization of the word brings with it a social role, which is defined by what the prophet is to do with the word, and which is protected or given stability by a close identification with Yahweh, who always stands closely behind his word. The word is, thus, central to the prophetic vocation. It is the substance of the prophet's concern, the raison d'être for his social role, and the integrating factor in his personal identity.

The Effect of God's Word on Jeremiah

When the word of God came to Jeremiah, it altered his whole existence both externally and internally. Beyond the effects which have already been noted, Jeremiah provides us with several glimpses into the intense power of the word within his life.

One of the most striking occurs in Jer. xxiii 9, through which we catch a glimpse of the intensity of suffering which possession of the word brought to the prophet. The context of the verse is a group of collected materials all of which relate to the leadership of Judah, the royal house, the priests, and especially those who with Jeremiah also bore the title "prophet" (נָבִיא). Jeremiah xxiii 9 actually opens a new section entitled לַנְּבִיאִים ("to the prophets"), although what follows in verses 9-12 is first Jeremiah's and then Yahweh's response to the general moral corruption of the land rather than a specific

indictment of the prophets.[31] The indictment actually begins in verse 13. Thus these verses act as a general introduction to what follows. First the prophet indicates his reaction to some general observations; then God declares that calamity will surely fall upon both priests and prophets, since they are the responsible moral leadership of the land.

Let us examine the source of the prophet's anguish before we evaluate the manner with which it is described. At the end of verse 9, Jeremiah states that his agony is מִפְּנֵי יהוה וּמִפְּנֵי דִּבְרֵי קָדְשׁוֹ ("because of Yahweh and because of his holy words"). דִּבְרֵי קָדְשׁוֹ is a unique expression here in all of Jeremiah, though it must refer to the prophecies which Jeremiah has been given. The LXX renders this last phrase as: καὶ ἀπὸ προσώπου εὐπρεπείας δόξης αὐτοῦ ("and because of the excellence of his glory"). It is possible that the translator was reading הֲדַר כְּבוֹדוֹ (BHS) or the like, though the reading is not supported by any of the other ancient versions or manuscripts. The sense conveyed by the LXX is that the prophet is overcome by a kind of mystical experience of the Lord. But in the MT and other versions it is clearly his interaction with Yahweh's perspective and revealed word which has provided insight into the nation's condition. It is this insight (verse 10) which so shocks and horrifies Jeremiah. Verse 9c should be linked with xv 17 and vi 11, both of which seem to refer to the prophecies of doom with which God has filled the prophet

and which subsequently have caused him agony. The text of verse 10 seems to contain some confusion, but it neverthless indicates the prophet's perspective (instructed by God's word) of extensive moral corruption in the land.[32] Unlike his cries of personal complaint in vi 11 and xv 17 that he should have to bear the exhausting burden of God's wrath, here the prophet expresses his sorrow over the vision itself. Verse 9 does not read as a personal complaint, but rather as an expression of lament. What God has helped the prophet to see, staggers him. This is not the first time that we encounter the prophet's dismay over a vision (cf. iv 19-26; viii 18 - ix 1), but generally the visions over which he expresses pain are ones of judgment, desolation, and exile--visions of what God is about to bring upon the people--rather than visions of the people's corruption.

How does the prophet describe his response? Verse 9 revolves around a specifc simile which gives us much clearer information than usual about the reaction which the prophet is trying to describe. Jeremiah says: "I have become like a drunken man and like a man overcome with wine" (הָיִיתִי כְּאִישׁ שִׁכּוֹר וּכְגֶבֶר עֲבָרוֹ יָיִן). The first phrase of the comparison is straightforward. שִׁכּוֹר appears twelve times in the OT as an adjective or substantive describing drunkenness. Elsewhere it is used four times metaphorically (Isa. xix 14; xxiv 20; Job xii 25; Ps. cvii 27), and these occurrences are useful since they give an indication of what qualities of a drunken state are being utilized in the

comparison. In Isa. xxiv 19, 20, the earth is being described as it disintegrates: "The earth is broken asunder; the earth is split through; the earth is shaken violently; the earth reels to and fro like a drunkard (נוֹעַ תָּנוּעַ אֶרֶץ כַּשִּׁכּוֹר) and it totters like a hut (וְהִתְנוֹדְדָה כַּמְלוּנָה)." In Ps. cvii 27 it is this same reeling, staggering characteristic which is used to describe the motion of those miserable on the stormy sea: "Their soul melted away in misery (verse 26b); They reeled and staggered like a drunken man (יָחוֹגּוּ וְיָנוּעוּ כַּשִּׁכּוֹר), and all their wisdom was swallowed up." It is this staggering which is also in view in the other two passages.

The second phrase of the comparison in Jeremiah xxiii 9 (וּכְגֶבֶר עֲבָרוֹ יָיִן) continues the image, but grammatically is more difficult to sort out. כְּגֶבֶר is a direct parallel with כְּאִישׁ .[33] Therefore, the relative clause עֲבָרוֹ יָיִן functions as a parallel for the adjective שִׁכּוֹר , which probably accounts for the unexpected suffix on the verb. "Wine passes over him" (the literal meaning of the phrase) is equivalent to "drunken." BDB draws attention to the phrase כִּי עֲוֹנֹתַי עָבְרוּ רֹאשִׁי ("for my iniquities have gone over my head") in Ps. xxviii 5 as an example of a similar use of עבר (Q), the meaning being that one is overcome by that which "goes/passes over" him.[34]

But it seems that in this second expression of drunkennnes more is involved in the simile than a mere loss of physical equalibrium. Yes, he is like a man who staggers

and reels, but he is also like one who is overcome mentally as well as physically. It is interesting to see how this distinction is made in the interpretation of the ancient versions. The LXX renders the whole image somewhat weakly due to misreading שִׁכּוֹר as שִׁבּוֹר ("brokendown"). Therefore the idea of drunkenness only sparsely comes through: ἐγενήθην ὡς ἀνὴρ συντετριμμένος καὶ ὡς ἄνθρωπος σθνεχόμενος ἀπὸ οἴνου ("I have become like a man brokendown and like a man affected by wine"). The Vulg., however, chooses words which intensify the image from a picture of one who is merely drunk, to a description of one who is "drenched" in wine: Factus sum quasi vir ebrius; Et quasi homo madidus a vino ("I have become like a drunk man; and like a man drenched/ drunk with wine"). The latter phrase is a fairly common one for a state of thorough drunkenness in Latin, and it perhaps seemed appropriate if the translator viewed רָוָה (Q) as indicating that the man was inundated by wine (in a figurative sense). The Pesh. translates the whole line quite literally as ܘܐܢܐ ܗܘܝܬ ܐܝܟ ܓܒܪܐ ܕܫܟܝܪ ܘܐܝܟ ܓܒܪܐ ܕܓܒܪ ("And I have become like a man drunk and like a man who is overcome by wine"). J. Payne Smith in her Compendious Syriac Dictionary suggests that the latter phrase means a man who is quarrelsome because of wine, "a brawler," from ܓܒܪ meaning "to transgress," though R. Payne Smith in Thesaurus Syriacus (on which the Compendious Dictionary is based) makes no such assumption.[35] There is certainly no indication from the context that Jeremiah is comparing

himself with "a brawler," launching out to fight against the prophets in a condition quite out of control of himself. But the Syriac does seem to interpret this latter image as referring to the effects of wine beyond the loss of equalibrium. The Targ. utilizes one very interesting word to render עֲבַרוֹ יַיִן in its phrase וּכְגִבְרָא דְמִשְׁתַּטְיָ . שְׁטִי (Ithpa.) is utilized elsewhere (Targ. I Sam. xviii 10 and Targ. I Kings sviii 29) to describe the "ravings" of Saul (when overtaken by an evil spirit) and the prophets of Baal on Mt. Caramel. In both cases it renders נבא (Hitp.) which is also associated with speaking or behaviour as a prophet (cf. Jer. xxiii 13; xxvi 20; xxix 27). In the Targ. of Deut. xxviii 34, שְׁטִי is used to render שגע (Pu.) meaning "crazy, mad." No doubt the closest use to the one found in Jeremiah is in the Targ. of I Sam. i 14, where it renders שכר (Hitp.) meaning "to act drunkenly." Nevertheless, the implication still remains that the person is found in a demented state. The phrase refers to the state of the mind during drunkenness, rather than to outward, physical characteristics alone. Kimchi follows this direction very clearly by interpreting the phrase as referring to one who "becomes drunk and has no knowledge of what he does." Kimchi goes on to indicate that the prophet is saying, "Thus am I in the presence of the Lord." His interpretation is that Jeremiah is overcome by anguish because it appears that Yahweh is the provoking agent for what the false prophets are saying.

It seems that Jeremiah may have employed two expressions of drunkenness not merely to reenforce each other, but to emphasize that his condition could be compared to drunkenness in at least two ways.

The first way, which was made clear through the expression שִׁבּוֹר , is to be associated with the phrase רָחֲפוּ כָּל-עַצְמוֹתָי ("all my bones tremble") which immediately precedes it. This is the outward physical symptom of the prophet's agony. He was so astonished by the moral depravity which Yahweh had caused him to see, that he was like a drunken man, staggering and reeling as if under a great weight (cf. Ps. xxxviii 5). רחף (Q) is a <u>hapax legomenon</u> which <u>BDB</u> takes to mean "grow soft, relax" from an Arabic root.[36] Holladay, however, associates it with the same root as רחף (P) in Gen. i 2 and Deut. xxxii 11, where it seems to mean "hover tremulously, flutter, quiver."[37] Johnson points out that this is the same meaning required for the cognate Ugaritic √r<u>h</u>p found in the Gordon and Driver editions in the passage where Anat enjoins the eagles to hover over Aqhat.[38] All of the ancient versions support a meaning suggesting that the prophet's bones are trembling or shaking.[39] But even if we adopt the sense that his bones "relax or go soft," the loss of muscle control is still clear.

The second way in which Jeremiah compares his agony with drunkenness relates to the more mental effects of drinking. Here the phrase עֲבַרְנִי יַיִן , as we have described

it above, can be seen to correspond with the first colon נִשְׁבַּר לִבִּי בְּקִרְבִּי("My heart is broken within me"). Thus, there is a chiastic structure in the first two lines of xxiii 9 based on the two types of descriptions (mental and physical) which the prophet uses with regard to his condition: colon A reveals mental turmoil; colon B reveals a corresponding physical turmoil; colon B' is a simile of physical disruption; colon A' is a simile of mental disruption. Now, of course, the meaning of the first colon is also couched in very "physical" terminology. The "heart . . . within me" can refer to a specific anatomical structure and שָׁבַר , can refer to a physical "fracturing" (as of a pot or bone) or "wounding." But that is obviously not Jeremiah's intention in the expression.[40] Here we have an example of the Hebrew way of utilizing physical descriptions to express mental or emotional realities. (Indeed, we employ the same kind of imagery in English.) It is his "reason" which is shocked and in anguish. Bright no doubt captures the correct inflection of the phrase by rendering it as "My reason is staggered within me."[41] Two lines of argument can be used to support this interpretation. The first comes from the parallel simile of the second line itself. When wine "overcomes" a person, it is his reason which is clouded. He may act irrationally and manifest a variety of strong emotions, but these are a result of no longer being able to think clearly. Reason, which is often the mediating factor in the control of emotion is suppressed, and the latter is

allowed to run rampant. Wine has taken control of the mind. He cannot avoid the effects. He is shocked, horrified, and broken by it. If his emotions are out of control, it is because his reason has been captured by the vision. We think of a "broken heart" as the emotional response to a deep disappointment or loss. Certainly God feels the loss of his "beloved" nation and this "pathos" becomes part of the prophet, but the context here is not a vision of the loss, but a vision of the moral corruption in leadership which is to a great extent responsible for that loss. God is no doubt saddened by the lack of responsiveness among the priests and prophets, but in this passage they are primarily seen as the wicked--the cursed, the adulterers--deserving only punishment. So this is not to be interpreted as the prophet's grieving, for God is not seen as grieving, but rather as the prophet's reason being overpowered by God's perspective.

The second line of argument to support the interpretation comes from the language itself, particularly in the use of לב . The "heart" in Hebrew thought can be viewed as the seat of certain states of feelings, such as joy and grief,[42] and as a physically reactant organ when a person is responding to strong emotion.[43] But as Wolff points out: "In by far the greatest number of cases it is intellectual, rational functions that are ascribed to the heart--i.e., precisely what we ascribe to the head, and more exactly, to the brain; cf. I Sam. 25.37."[44] In Hos. iv 11,

12 the prophet declares: "Harlotry, wine (יַיִן) and new wine take away the heart of my people (קַח-לֵב עַמִּי) --transposing עַמִּי from beginning of verse 12 in MT, cf. LXX). They enquire of their wooden thing, and their staff informs them." The "people who rely on the use of mindless oracles have lost their heart, that is to say they have been robbed of their understanding or, to be more precise, they have lost their power of judgment and direction."[45] Here the wine is seen as the robber. Similarly, Prov. xxiii 31 f. states: "Do not look at wine (יַיִן) when it is red . . . at last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper. Your eyes will see strange things, and your heart will utter absurdities (וְלִבְּךָ יְדַבֵּר תַּהְפֻּכוֹת)." Again it is reason which is affected by the wine, and it is the word "heart" which is employed to indicate the source of reasoning ability. In other contexts, לֵב should be rendered "understanding,"[46] "conscience,"[47] "intention,"[48] "place of decision,"[49] "impulse of the will,"[50] etc. All of these relate to the use of the mind. It seems highly likely that this is how Jeremiah is using the term here, especially in its connection with the image of drunkenness.[51]

To summarize our exegesis of Jer. xxiii 9, we find the prophet in great agony because of God's perspective and word which has made clear the depth of the moral corruption on the part of Judah's leadership. Jeremiah describes his response as being overwhelmed both mentally and physically. The realization rushes over him like drunkenness. And his

body shakes, perhaps in intense concentration and brokenness, making him feel like someone who is drunk and cannot keep his balance. The structure of the verse and the language used are very carefully and artistically utilized for maximum effect. As in the incidences where Jeremiah encounters God's word of judgment, there is a marked sense of unwholeness which is implied--an unwholeness which stems from awareness. Healing for the prophet is not mentioned. To deny the situation which has caused the agony would be to deny the truth. And God would have the prophet to be vividly cognizant of the truth. Healing in this case seemingly can come only as God's justice is exercised.[52] Jeremiah's agony is related to God's own agony.

Articulating God's Word

Possession of God's word was only the first state of the prophetic vocation. Jeremiah's function was not only to possess the word, but to articulate it, to give it literary form and to proclaim it to the people. In fact, the bulk of the statements relating directly to Jeremiah's relationship to the word, refer in some way to its transmission. Over and over the commands are recorded: "Speak this word to them" (Jer. xiv 17; xiii 12; xxii 1); "Go and proclaim these words" (Jer. iii 12); "Prophecy all these words against them" (Jer. xxv 30); "Speak . . . all the words which I command you to speak to them; do not omit a word" (Jer. xxvi 2); "Proclaim there the words which I speak to you" (Jer.

xix 2); and eventually even "Write all the words which I have spoken to you in a book" (Jer. xxx 2; similarly xxxvi 2, 28, 32). And Jeremiah was faithful to do as he was commanded. Faithfully he announced: "You of this generation, consider (lit.: "see!") the word of Yahweh" (Jer. ii 31); "Hear, O women, the word of Yahweh" (Jer. ix 19); "Nevertheless, listen to the word which I am speaking in your hearing and in the hearing of all the people" (Jer. xxviii 7). Faithfully he "dictated all the words which Yahweh had spoken to him" (Jer. xxxvi 4; also vss. 17f.) and commanded that Baruch should "read from the scroll . . . the words of Yahweh in the hearing of the people" (Jer. xxxvi 6; similarly vss. 8, 10, 11, 13). And Jeremiah affirmed, "In truth Yahweh has sent me to you to speak all these words in your hearing" (Jer. xxvi 15; similarly vs. 10) and "for twenty-three years the word of Yahweh has come to me and I have spoken to you repeatedly (Jer. xxv 3).

The Content of דבר יהוה

The content of the word which Jeremiah proclaimed may be seen as it is preserved specially in the poetry sections of the book. But of interest to us in this study are the few verses in which Jeremiah characterizes the word as he has received it. Three passages in particular are noteworthy.

The first is Jer. xv 17b, where Jeremiah describes what he believes to be one of the sources of his social ostracism

and personal conflict. He says: מִפְּנֵי יָדְךָ בָּדָד יָשַׁבְתִּי כִּי-זַעַם מִלֵּאתָנִי ("Because of your hand, I stay alone; for you filled me with indignation"). The phrase מִפְּנֵי יָדְךָ may be viewed as a declaration of God's direct intervention in the life of the prophet. In I Kings xviii 46, the statement is made that "the hand of the Lord was upon Elijah (וַיַּד-יְהוָה הָיְתָה אֶל-אֵלִיָּהוּ --possibly reading על for אל with LXX) and he girded up his loins and went before Ahab to Jezreel," Here God was supplying impetus and direction. In Isaiah viii 11, the prophet says that ". . . the Lord spoke to me with strength of the hand (כִּי כֹה אָמַר יהוה אֵלַי בְּחֻזְקַת הַיָּד) and instructed me . . ."[53] Thus the prophet receives special instructions with regard to correct behaviour and proclamation of his message. Similar phrases appear often in Ezekiel as in i 3: וַתְּהִי עָלָיו שָׁם יַד-יְהוָה ("and there the hand of the Lord was upon him") where the context is specifically the receipt of God's word.[54] The emphasis is upon a direct, specific encounter between Yahweh and the prophet which is initiated by God, unavoidable by the prophet, and determinative of the prophet's vocational situaion. In the Jer. xv passage, Rashi relates the phrase specifically to the prophecy which came to the prophet from God. Kimchi makes a similar suggestion, glossing מפני ידך with מפני יד הנבואה , but he also suggests that the phrase could refer to the blows, curses, and suffering inflicted upon the prophet. The result of this type of encounter for Jeremiah was that he "sat alone."[55]

It is the final note of the verse which describes the specific endownment of God or content of the word which the prophet has experienced. The use of the verb מלא (here in the Piel) is quite common in the OT as an indication of divine endowment. In Mic. iii 8, the prophet states: וְאוּלָם אָנֹכִי מָלֵאתִי כֹחַ אֶת-רוּחַ יהוה וּמִשְׁפָּט וּגְבוּרָה . . . ("And on the other hand, I am full of power, of the spirit of the Lord, of justice and of courage . . ."). Micah here contrasts his own vocational qualifications with those of the false prophets. He does not speak on the basis of his own aptitude, but from capacities which have come upon him. In Deut. xxxiv 9, the statement is made that "Joshua the son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom (מָלֵא רוּחַ חָכְמָה)" when Moses ordained him. In I Kings vii 14, Hiram of Tyre, a worker in bronze, is described as "filled (מלא Niphal) with wisdom, understanding, and skill." Similar descriptions of the endowments of craftsmen for their trade are seen in Exod. xxviii 3; xxxi 3; xxxv 31, 35 (all utilizing מלא Piel). In each case the source of endowment is Yahweh.

The key term for our purposes is זעם which describes the content of what Jeremiah has received. זעם appears only two other times in Jeremiah. In x 10 it is in parallel with קצף (cf. Ps. cii 11) and describes the powerful judgment of the "true God, the living God, and the everlasting King" before whom "the earth trembles and the nations cannot endure." In Jer. l 25, the phrase כלי זעמו

("weapons of his indignation," cf. Isa. xiii 5) is a strong image of God's wrath leading to combatant action (in this case against Babylon who has "engaged in conflict with the Lord" verse 24b). עבר appears elsewhere in the OT in parallel construction with every word describing God's wrath which is utilized in Jeremiah, with the exception of חמה.[56] It is interesting to note, that one of the more frequently occurring expressions utilizing עבר elsewhere in the OT is שפך זעם על (Ps. lxix 25; Ezek. xxi 36; xxii 31; Zeph. iii 8) which is identical to the construction in Jer. vi 11b (to be discussed below), except that the object, חמה, is implied from the previous line rather than directly stated.[57] Thus עבר must be seen in this line initially as the active, righteous indignation or rage of God which expresses itself in righteous judgment. Jeremiah knows that עבר describes God's response to the wickedness around him (cf. x 10), and now he states that God has encountered him and endowed him with this response as well. The result has been his alienation from those around him. עבר taken in this light may be viewed, on the one hand, as a psychological state, or, more specifically, as an evaluatory grid determining the prophet's response to his social environment. In this case, his isolation is due to the fact that he can no longer ignore the wickedness of those around him, but finds himself willingly withdrawing as he responds to their wickedness with indignation. On the other hand, עבר may also be taken more concretely as referring to the

specific oracles of judgment and doom which Yahweh has revealed to the prophet. In this latter case, his alienation would be due to the negative response from those to whom the oracles are addressed and to their subsequent withdrawal from him.

From the internal, exegetical evidence, it is this second possibility which has stronger support. First, there is support from the immediate context of xv 17, since in verse 16 Jeremiah speaks of having "eaten" God's words. Whether this is a reference to God's words as "found" with the scroll in 621 B.C., a reference to the reception of God's words from the former prophets, or a reference to a direct revelation (see the discussion above), it is still God's words which are internalized by the prophet and which subsequently become "a joy and gladness." Of course, it may be argued that prophecies of doom of the nature described by בוז would not cause an emotion of exhileration. But Jeremiah's joy is not in the message but in his obedience to God's call. As in the case of Ezekiel (cf. Ezek. iii 1ff.) even prophecies of doom could be described as "sweet as honey in my mouth." Second, it may be argued that it was never God's plan (nor Jeremiah's) that the prophet should separate himself from his people, as would have to be the case if his isolation was brought about by Jeremiah's emotional disgust with their wickedness. To the contrary, there is every indication that part of Jeremiah's vocational tension was the conflict between his love for his people and

the severity of the oracles which he was required to deliver. Earlier in chapter xv, Jeremiah describes himself (xv 10) as "a man of strife and contention to all the land," a phrase which has a distinctly legal background. It may be argued that there are those passages which do indicate that it was Yahweh's desire that Jeremiah withdraw from his people. Especially prominent among these would be xvi 1-9. But a close look at this passage reveals that Jeremiah's non-participation was not to be motivated from an overwhelming sense of anger, but from God's command to visibly portray that God's peace, lovingkindness and compassion was now being withdrawn even from those who would mourn in the time of destruction (verse 5). Finally, when God expresses his עבר, it is always in action, not merely emotion. His עבר acts upon those to whom it is directed (cf. Jer. x 10; l 25; Isa. x 5; etc.). Thus, when God fills the prophet with עבר, it is with those actions appropriate to the prophet, namely the prophetic word to be proclaimed --and in this case it is an oracle of doom (cf. xv 5-9). The prophet's words are his כלי זעם ("weapons/ instruments of indignation").

The various options for the interpretation of עבר as suggested above are also reflected in the ancient versions. The Pesh. provides the most general translation in rendering עבר with ܪܓܙ ("anger"--also used in Jer. x 10). The LXX interprets the phrase ὅτι πικρίας ἐνεπλήσθην ("for I was filled with bitterness"). Here there is no indication of

God's endowment. Rather the phrase is cast as a first person singular (reading Hebrew מלאתי?), and the response is a self-indulgent "bitterness" instead of a compelling, righteous anger or prophetic oracle. This is much more like the phrases in Esther iii 5 and v 9, where Haman was filled with rage (וַיִּמָּלֵא הָמָן חֵמָה) because Mordecai refused to pay him homage. Elsewhere in the OT πικρίας typically translates forms of מר which describe a gloomy or embittered attitude (cf. Job xxi 25). Had the translator perceived זעם as a characteristic of Yahweh which was bestowed upon the prophet, he no doubt would have employed either θυμός or ὀργή , the two terms which (along with their cognates) are used interchangeably to translate all of the Hebrew words referring to God's wrath. But, instead, Jeremiah's response is framed as a personal one.[58]

While the LXX moves toward the psychological in its interpretation, both the Vulg. and Targ. definitely view זעם as prophetic messages. The Targ. is most specific by glossing זעם with נְבוּאָן דְּלָוָט ("a prophecy of curse") assuming that זעם is an oracle of doom. Both Rashi and Kimchi follow the Targ. in their commentaries, though Rashi adds that the particular prophecy of doom which is in view concerns the destruction of the Temple. The Vulg. renders זעם with comminatione which is elsewhere used only in Jer. x 10 (also to render זעם) and Isa xxx 30 where it is part of a phrase without correspondent in the MT. Its meaning is

"threats" or "threatening" and it certainly has the sense of a declaration of potential doom.

The second passage containing an interesting phrase concerning the character of God's word as it was received by Jeremiah is vi lla. Jeremiah vi opens with still another oracle of warning for Jerusalem concerning the destruction which God would bring by the hand of the "enemy from the north." There is a great sense of foreboding. All is ready. The destruction, which would render Jerusalem a desolation, a land not inhabited" (verse 8), is poised as if ready for God's final signal to begin. God's judgment on the oppression and wickedness of the people is so close to becoming actuality that all it would take is a word from Yahweh and the instruments of judgment would be set into motion. And Jeremiah witnesses this reality. From the persepctive of prophetic vision, he sees clearly the preparations for Jerusalem's (and Judah's) demise, but he also sees with naked clarity the wickedness of the people which is drawing the day of judgment ever nearer. The poetry is fraught with tension, as if Jerusalem is now at the final point of decision which will either stay God's hand or send her history rushing toward a tragic denouement. Verse 8 rings in the passage like a clarion: "Be warned, O Jerusalem, lest my soul be alienatated from you; lest I make you a desolation, a land not inhabited."

It is indeed fitting that a passage of this intensity should be followed by a brief dialogue between God and the

prophet concerning the tension and efficacy of prophetic vocation. This seems to be the intent and structure of vi 9-15 as it appears in the MT, but the text and imagery is not altogether clear as the versions reflect. The LXX, for example, takes the entire passage as a continuation of Yahweh's proclamation without any hint of personal word from the prophet.

Verse 9 is crucial as the transition into the section. It opens with the characteristic . . . כֹּה אָמַר יהוה used to introduce oracles, but which is also found in sections addressed specifically to the prophet (cf. xv 19). The next line in the MT reads עוֹלֵל יְעוֹלְלוּ כַגֶּפֶן ("they will thoroughly glean as a vine") with the subject understood as those who will come in siege from the north. The Vulg., Pesh., and Targ. follow the MT at this point, but the LXX reads two second person plural imperatives: καλαμᾶσθε καλαμᾶσθε ὡς ἄμπελον ("Glean, glean as a vine. . ." for Hebrew עוללו עוללו ?). As with the other ancient versions, it is the enemy which is apparently the subject, but the command form has the effect of transforming what follows into the very signal by which God releases the devastation from the northern enemy. The rest of the pericope in the LXX appears as Yahweh's proclamation that his restraint is at an end (cf. especially verse 11 as discussed below). Perhaps, the LXX employs the imperative forms at this point to reconcile this first statement with the imperative found in the second part of the verse. Indeed, the MT does open

with an imperative (הָשֵׁב יָדְךָ כְּבוֹצֵר "pass your hand like a vintager . . .") in the second line in a parallel position. But in the MT it is a second person singular, which seems to be a command addressed to Jeremiah rather than the enemy. Tnis singular form has been preserved in the Vulg., Targ, and Pesh., but the LXX reads a plural form (ἐπιστρέψατε) as in the first line. The statement in LXX thus reads: "Glean, glean as a vine the remnant of Israel, turn as a grape-gatherer to his basket." The motivation of the Greek translator was apparently a desire to bring consistency to the verse in both subject and verb form. Hence, both verbs were emended, the first to agree with the imperative sense of the second line, and the second to agree with the plural subject of the first line. Many modern commentators also emend the text by substituting a parallel imperative form in the first line (עוֹלֵל עוֹלֵל for עוֹלֵל וְעוֹלְלוּ).[59] Note, however, that while they typically cite both the imperative form in the second line and the LXX reading as justification for the emendation, they have departed from the LXX by suggesting that Jeremiah (a singular rather than plural subject), and not the enemy, is the subject of the entire verse. Such an emendation is not necessary in order to make good sense out of the verse, and is ill-advised in the absence of any real support from the versions.

If the MT is permitted to stand, then the two lines of the statement must have different subjects. S. R. Driver would rather see the second line as a dramatic address by

Yahweh "to the chief of the grape-gatherers (i.e. the leader of the foe)," so that the whole statement can at least refer to one group, first in general and then to a particular part.[60] But this does not seem necessary either, and is certainly somewhat contrived. A better solution is that Yahweh here uses a unified image first to make a statement about the enemy by way of summary, and, second to encourage the prophet to make yet another effort in communicating with the people. It is clear in verse 8 that it is still possible for the people to repent, although the time is rapidly running out. When the enemy does come, the desolation will be complete (cf. the prophet's vision in iv 23ff.). Nothing will remain. Israel will be "like a vine which they will thoroughly glean." The image here is similar to that in Jer. xlix 9, 10 where God describes the destruction of Edom. Verse 9 indicates that often when grape gatherers glean, many grapes are left behind (a sort of remnant) because they are concealed. This is contrasted with the way that "Esau" has been stripped bare so that all is destroyed.[61] When the enemy comes (Jer. vi 9), God declares that "they will <u>thoroughly</u> glean." This is the impact of the grammatical construction where the infinitive absolute is used before the active verb to strengthen the verbal idea.[62] Even the remnant of Israel will be destroyed. Thus, the "vine" image already utilized in ii 21 and v 10 is extended and employed as a summary statement of the oracle which precedes it. In contrast to this total

destruction, the prophet still has the opportunity to go into the "vineyard" and once again to pass his hands "over the tendrils like a grape-gatherer (or vintager)" looking for any fruit which yet remains. Soon it will be too late, and even the remaining fruit (should there be any) will be destroyed. Because of the impending destruction, there is urgency in Jeremiah's task.[63]

In verse 10, Jeremiah launches his objection to God's command. To whom shall he go? He had already responded to a similar command in v 1, but though he searched among the lowly and the great alike, no one could be found who had not "broken the yoke and burst the bonds" (v 5). There was no one who was seeking to be faithful to God's way and ordinance and, hence, no one who would listen to the warnings. In fact, Jeremiah goes on to assert that they are not able to listen (וְלֹא יוּכְלוּ לְהַקְשִׁיב --vi 10b) because their ears are "uncircumcised." This statement, read against the background of Jer. iv 4, where God commands the people to "circumcise yourselves to the Lord and remove the foreskins of your heart" in an act of repentance, means that Jeremiah does not consider the people either fit to listen or predisposed to listen. It may also mean that their ears are simply "closed" as if covered by a foreskin. Finally, Jeremiah says that "the word of the Lord has become a source of reproach (לְחֶרְפָּה) to them; they do not delight in it."[64] The meaning of this final line seems clear. There is nothing about the people which is to be commended in the

eyes of God. Therefore, his word constantly comes to them revealing their inadequacies and failures. Naturally, this is not what they want to hear. It is much easier to delight in the message of the false prophets, who say "Peace, peace," (vi 4) than in this message of correction and condemnation.

Guided by "thus says the Lord" in verse 9a, the LXX, as we have noted earlier, reads this entire passage as an oracle of Yahweh. This fact is not entirely clear from verse 10 alone which reads much like the MT and could fit into the mouth of either God or the prophet. But it does become evident again in verse 11a, which the LXX renders as καὶ τὸν θυμόν μου ἔπλησα (literally: "I filled my anger"; translated by Brenton as "And I allowed my wrath to come to the full").[65] It appears that the LXX is reading Hebrew ואת חמתי מלאתי rather than ואת חמת יהוה מלאתי. Janzen assumes that the LXX is the superior text here and that the context is a first person statement by Yahweh. He explains the MT as a corruption having been influenced by דבר יהוה in verse 10.[66] But the problem with following the LXX at this point is that it creates the necessity for too many emendations in the MT in order to render the verse meaningful, and this emendation process must be done against the witness of the Vulg. and Targ. which follow the MT in most respects. It cannot be determined what text the LXX is reading, but in all probability it is some form of the MT. And the particular form of the LXX reflects the necessity to

iron out the unevenness in the text which is created by the emendation process. Even without specific statements designating one part of this pericope to Yahweh and another to the prophet in dialogue fashion, there is nothing awkward in this interpretation. Certainly, this type of exchange is not without precedent in other sections of the book (cf. Jer. xii 1-6; xv 10, 11, 15-21).

Assuming now that verses 10 and 11a belong in the mouth of the prophet (following the sense of the MT), we can now move on to an evaluation of the prophet's condition as he describes it in vi 11a. The first colon (MT) reads וְאֵת חֵמַת יהוה מָלֵאתִי . The inverted syntax is unusual but is probably due to emphasis. The grammar is also somewhat unusual. It is likely that the אֵת should be read as an object marker rather than a preposition. מלא (Q) does not appear with the preposition את . When it appears with an object and the object marker is present, it is most commonly taken as a transitive verb meaning "to fill."[67] This fact is perhaps one reason why the LXX renders it awkwardly as transitive. When מלא reflects an intransitive verb meaning "to be full of," it is rarely accompanied by the object marker.[68] However, there are a few exceptions, including Ezek. x 4 and Micah iii 8, which provide a precedent for the grammatical phenomenon as it occurs in Jeremiah.

As in the case of Jer. xv 17b discussed above, the phrase "I am full of the wrath of Yahweh" should be read

against the background of the other OT passages where מלא is utilized to indicate a state of divine endowment.[69] It is Yahweh who has filled the prophet with "wrath." Among the various words used to describe God's anger in Jeremiah, חמה is quite appropriate in this complaint of the prophet, especially in its connotation of intense heat. This characteristic is specific in Jer. iv 4: פֶּן-תֵּצֵא כָאֵשׁ חֲמָתִי וּבָעֲרָה וְאֵין מְכַבֶּה ("Lest my wrath go forth like a fire and burn with no one to quench it"). In Jeremiah xx 9, the prophet states that "the word of Yahweh" (verse 8) becomes "like a fire burning in my heart, imprisoned in my bones." Of course, the situation in xx 9 is somewhat different since Jeremiah is describing the results of wilful suppression of Yahweh's word. In Jer. vi he is apparently willing to speak, but can perceive no receptive audience. In both cases, however, the vision of God's wrath and the words of God's judgment are so deeply instilled within his fabric that their expression will not be denied. God has endowed Jeremiah with something of his own response to the people (and here the emphasis is on his anger concerning their wickedness), and these responses burn within the prophet's soul.

As in the case of Jer. xv 17b, the question can now be raised as to the exact nature of God's endowment as it is being perceived by Jeremiah. Is the חמה with which he is filled to be understood as a psychological response or a character trait similar to Micah's endowment of "power, . .

. .justice, and courage" or Hiram's endowment of "wisdom, understanding, and skill?" Or is Jeremiah referring here to his endowment with specific oracles of doom? Certainly in chapter xx it is the "word of Yahweh" which becomes like a fire in Jeremiah's bones.[70] It seems reasonable that this is also the case here, particularly in light of the similar nature of xv 17b.

The Targum interpretively glosses חמת יהוה with נְבוּאָה בְּתוּקְפָּא מִן קֳדָם יְיָ ("a prophecy with power from before the Lord"), understanding חמה as a specific oracle. This is consistent with the Targum's practice in xv 17b and elsewhere. It is interesting that the Targ. further describes the prophecy as one "with power," rather than focusing on the nature or content of the message (e.g. "prophecy of a curse" in xv 17). But this can be explained by the juxtaposition of assigning the origin of the prophecy in God (designated by the circumlocution מן קדם יי typical of the Targum) with a desire to emphasize the strong effect on the prophet. It is a prophetic oracle, the presence of which places powerful demands and tensions on Jeremiah. The Targum follows this interpretation through with an unusual rendering of the next phrase: "I am weary of enduring, but I am not able to pour it out. . ." By dividing the second colon, inserting an extra verb (cf. Targ. of Jer. xx 9), and then providing an entirely new construction to the beginning of the second line (including the insertion of a negative), the Targ. paraphrases the verse to say that the prophet is

caught between two alternative actions. He cannot hold his message back (because it is too strong), but neither can he pour it out. This is not faithful to the MT, but it is an intriguing comment on the dilemma which the receipt of a strong prophetic word can create.

Rashi, who is probably following the Targ. to a limited degree, also sees the verse as referring to a specific prophecy. He glosses the text with: "My heart is full of a prophecy that the wrath of Yahweh should come upon them."

The Vulgate renders Jer. vi lla in a general sense here by Idcirco furore Domini plenus sum ("Therefore I am full of the fury of the Lord"), rather than specifically designating חמה as oracles in the way that עיר is understood in xv 17b. But it is interesting that the line is introduced by the conjunction idcirco which has no correspondent in the MT.[71] Thus the translator frames vi lla as the result of the fact that there is no outlet for the prophet's expresion (verse 10). The addition of the conjunction has the effect of indicating a correspondence between the "fury of the Lord" and the "word of the Lord" (from verse 10). It therefore seems likely that the Vulg. also takes חמה as a designation of prophetic oracles.

The content of the word of Yahweh as characterized by Jeremiah in Jer. xv 17b and vi lla is the righteous, burning anger of God. So characteristic is this wrath, that Jeremiah feels the freedom to utilize the words עיר and חמה as designations for prophetic oracles.

The third passage in which Jeremiah characterizes the word of Yahweh is xx 8. Again, the context of the verse is the tension which Jeremiah experiences within his prophetic vocation. He complains in verse 7 that God has deceived him by making him a bearer of a word which brings him only "insult and ridicule all day long" (verse 8b).

Jeremiah's tension is summarized in the first phrase of verse 8: "For as often as I speak, I cry out (in lament or anxiety)" (כִּי-מִדֵּי אֲדַבֵּר אֶזְעָק). The juxtaposition of the two verbs stresses the warring elements within the prophet. On the one hand, is his obedience to his call to speak God's word, and, on the other hand, is the pain triggered by the exercise of the gift.

The phrase which is of primary concern here is חָמָס וְשֹׁד אֶקְרָא which, I contend, should be read as a characterization or description of the Word--God's message--which Jeremiah proclaims to the people. The phrase is admittedly ambiguous in its reference as reflected in the ancient versions.[72] The LXX seems to read the phrase as a personal cry of ill treatment: "For I will laugh with my bitter speech, I will call out 'rebellion and misery' because the word of the Lord has become a reproach to me. . . . "(ὅτι πικρῷ λόγῳ μου γελάσομαι, ἀθεσίαν καὶ ταλαιπωρίαν ἐπικαλέσομαι, ὅτι ἐγενήθη λόγος κυρίου . . .) This interpretation is followed by Baumgartner and Weiser among others.[73] The paraphrase of the Targum which reads וְעַל חֲטוֹפִין וּבָזוֹזִין אֲנָא מְחַנַּבֵּי ". . . and I am prophesying

against the violent men and the plunderers. . ."), suggests that the phrase refers to the sin of certain groups of people which necessitates judgment. This interpretation is followed by Nötscher, and to a certain extent by Berridge who sees the vocabulary as a standard cry which refers to the violation of social justice.[74] Similarly, the Vulg. renders חמס as referring to the iniquity of the people by reading this first word of the phrase with the verb which precedes it: Vociferans iniquitatem ("I am crying out against iniquity"). But the Vulg. then takes the latter part of the phrase as a statement of the judgment proclaimed by Yahweh: . . .et vastitatem clamito (". . .and I proclaim devastation"). Rashi (also von Rad, Blank, and Chambers) follows this interpretation and states: "And I am not proclaiming to them good but prophecies of 'violence and ruin.'"[75]

Comparison with other passages utilizing the phrase חָמָס וְשֹׁד (or its reverse), indicates that it is highly unlikely that Jeremiah would have employed the phrase in reference to his own suffering.[76] The phrase seems to be a standard one referring to the sins of the people and the violation of social justice. God's Word, as Jeremiah proclaims it, calls the people to accountability for their behaviour. Over and over he is called to point out the violence and destruction which has become a part of the very fabric of society.

The tension inherent in the first phrase of the verse ("As often as I speak I cry out in anguish") is subsequently

expanded in the remaining lines. In the second phrase Jeremiah characterizes his message and then, in the final lines, he indicates that in speaking God's word of reproach, he has become an object of the mocking reproaches of others.

We may now summarize Jeremiah's understanding of the content of the word of Yahweh as it is characterized in Jer. xv 17b, vi 11a, and xx 8. In each instance the word is full of judgment concerning the sin of the people and the consequent righteous wrath of God. There is no consolation or hope here because there is no repentance on the part of the people. Proclamations of "Peace! Peace!" belong only to the false prophets.

The Response to God's Word

Although Jeremiah was faithful in his proclamation of God's word, the response of the nation was generally rejection, offense, and scorn.

Repeatedly the charge is made that the people refused to listen to God's word. Disaster would come precisely because of this rejection. "Hear, O earth: I am bringing disaster on this people, the fruit of their schemes, because they have not listened to my words and have rejected my law" (Jer. vi 19).[77] Jer. xxvi 5 indicates that this rejection was not something new, but, indeed, was the manner in which the people had treated the words of all of God's prophets, though God had sent them again and again.

The most concise explanation of why the people refused

to listen is found in Jer. vi 10: "Their ears are uncircumcised so they cannot hear. The word of the Lord is offensive to them: they find no pleasure in it." Two explanations are given. The first is that the people's ears are closed. They are neither fit to listen nor predisposed to listen. They have become so culturally and personally hardened in their sin, that God's word no longer has any significance to them. The second explanation is that even if they could hear the message, it is so offensive to them that it is rejected out of hand. Obedience to God's word would mean repentance, changed lifestyle, and renewed covenant loyalty. These are perceived as burdensome in comparison with the lawless sentiments of the age which promise a greater freedom and the wanton pursuit of idols which panders to personal convenience.

As if it were not enough that the people reject God's word, they go on to mock and scorn it by questioning its veracity and efficacy. Typical is Jer. xvii 15 where Jeremiah complains: הִנֵּה־הֵמָּה אֹמְרִים אֵלַי אַיֵּה דְבַר־יהוה יָבוֹא נָא׃ ("Behold! they are saying to me, 'Where is the word of Yahweh? Let it come!'").[78] These words reflect a general and growing skepticism on the part of the people in the face of Jeremiah's repeated and unfulfilled prophecies of doom. both God and the prophet are being questioned, and it is for this reason that the prophet calls for an actualization of God's word in verse 18.

The Word of God and the Prophet's Dilemma

We now come to what is perhaps the inevitable result of the history of God's word as it is revealed through the experience of Jeremiah. We have seen clearly that it is the possession and proclamation of the דבר-יהוה which fundamentally established the prophet's vocation and identity. The prophet is called to articulate God's word which is full of judgment and wrath in the face of obduracy. We have also observed the overpowering nature of the word. Although the prophet always had the freedom to be obedient or disobedient to his divine call, there were many occasions when he found himself virtually trapped. When he wanted to escape the burden of proclaiming the word, he discovered that the word possessed him as much as he might be said to possess it. T. H. Robinson comments:

> The fire of prophecy blazed within him, and his whole soul was torn asunder between the impossibility of going on and the impossibility of refraining. Such conflict and agony of spirit have hardly any parallel in the records of man's spiritual life. 79

Herein lies the essential dilemma of the prophetic vocation as perceived by Jeremiah. The very element which establishes the purpose, identity and meaning for his life also places him squarely in the midst of outward persecution, mockery, and isolation as well as inward doubt, turmoil, and agony. He cannot escape.

The occasions when the dilemma was most acutely felt by the prophet occurred when he attempted to minimize his suffering by ceasing to exercise his vocation. In Jer. xx

9, Jeremiah relates such an occasion when he said to himself, "I will not remember it (the word); and I will not speak in his name again." But the results of this solution proved completely unsatisfactory as the prophet explains: "And it (the word) becomes in my heart like a burning fire, imprisoned in my bones." In light of the fact that the prophet frequently described God's word in terms of the "hot" anger which it contained, it is quite appropriate that when shut up within himself he should describe it as burning. Ultimately, Jeremiah was conquered by the word as xx 9c and the second colon of vi 11a indicate.

It is upon these phrases in which Jeremiah provides an assessment of his struggle with the word that we will now focus. The MT of Jer. vi 11a reads נִלְאֵיתִי הָכִיל , a phrase combining a perfect verb-form with an infinitive. לאה (N) occurs four times in the poetry of Jer. i-xx (out of 10 occurrences in all of the OT). Here and in xx 9 as well it is used to describe the prophet's weariness, though from the verb alone it is not clear whether the weariness is emotional or physical. In xv 6, the same first person singular form is used in an oracle in which Yahweh declares נִלְאֵיתִי הִנָּחֵם ("I am weary of relenting") as an expression of exhausted patience. In ix 4, a seemingly corrupted passage, the verb is probably used to explain that the people through their persistent and extensive wickedness have now grown too weak to repent.[80] In this case, the context allows both an actual, physical weariness from all

of the iniquitous activity and a breakdown of psycho-emotional resources which would normally provide the resolve to repent. In all four appearances an infinitive is employed without the use of ל. While this is not an uncommon phenomenon,[81] both Rashi and Kimchi gloss the phrase with the addition of the ל.[82]

Is it possible to determine whether the prophet is describing an emotional exhaustion/impatience (as in xv 6) or a more physical struggle? Some assistance might be expected from evaluating the accompanying infinitive הָכִיל (in vi 11) from the root כול (H). But once again, the variety of meanings proves the phrase to be somewhat ambiguous. Often כול (H) has the sense of "to endure" as in Jer. x 10 (cf. Joel ii 11), though its basic meaning is "to contain" (frequently applied to liquids as in Jer. ii 13; I Kings vii 26, 38; etc.). In this latter sense, to be sure, the verb is often used figuratively. For example, Amos vii 10 records Amaziah's complaint about Amos to Jeroboam saying in part: לֹא-תוּכַל הָאָרֶץ לְהָכִיל אֶת-כָּל-דְּבָרָיו which is generally translated as "the land is not able to endure all his words."[83] However, with the emphasis on "all his words," the statement could just as easily be read figuratively as: "the earth is not able to contain all his words," indicating the extensive nature of his prophetic ministry.[84] There is, perhaps, an even better case for this kind of interpretation here in Jer. vi 11, since the verb שפך , which begins the second line, would then continue the

image. The wrath of Yahweh (and its corresponding oracles) fill Jeremiah much as a liquid fills a vessel. He is weary of trying to contain it. That is his dilemma--he is called to prophesy, but both the unresponsiveness of the people and his own solidarity with them make it difficult for them to listen and hard for him to speak. So he has to struggle to contain that with which he has been endowed. But Yahweh solves the dilemma here with another command. Even though Jeremiah is restrained by his unwillingness to proclaim, God commands that he should pour out the prophecies of wrath upon the citizens at-large, the child who is playing in the street and the young men assembled together (cf. Ezek. ii 5ff.).[85] This figurative interpretation is also consistent with the similar phrase in Jer. xx 9 where the form of כוּל is the Pilpel infinitive כַּלְכֵּל . Once again this verb form can be found with a variety of meanings similar to those of the Hiphil. But in this verse, the presence of the Qal passive participle of עצר in line 2, meaning "shut up or imprisoned" indicates that כוּל should be read as "contain" in order to maintain a consistent image. All of this, of course, is consistent with Jeremiah's perception of the concrete nature of the prophetic word with which he is endowed. In Jer. xv 16, for example, he speaks of "eating" God's words and in his call narrative (i 9), God's words are "placed" (נתן) in his mouth (cf. also Jer. v 14; Deut. xviii 18).

None of the ancient versions retains this imagery in

translating either Jer. vi 11a or xx 9c. LXX takes all of vi 11 as spoken by Yahweh. The second colon of the first line is interpreted as an expression of God's forbearance up to this point: "I filled my anger (i.e. allowed my wrath to come to the full), yet I have kept it in check and have not brought them to an end." It is impossible to ascertain what Hebrew was being read here. If ἐπέσχον represents some form of כוּל (which is the closest correspondence among any of the words employed), it is still clear that it is the idea of endurance and holding back which is in view rather than any concept of containing. In xx 9, LXX misses the infinitive altogether and renders the phrase as "I am weakened from every side." It is possible here that πάντοθεν represents כֻּלּה as in Jer. xlviii 31, or better yet, כֹּל כֹּל as a distributive construction which preserves the BH text, but the expression is thereby changed from a statement reflecting an inability to contain the "burning" word to another statement of self-pity or complaint over general harassment. The Vulg. utilizes the word <u>sustinens</u> in both vi 11 and xx 9 to represent כוּל (though in xx 9 the word order is transposed and the infinitive is read with יכל rather than with לאה . Hence: "And I was wearied, not being able to endure." Again the emphasis is on "enduring, bearing up, withstanding" rather than "containing." The Targ. goes its own way on vi 11, but both here and in xx 9 the infinitive is rendered by סובלא . Again, the emphasis is on enduring or sustaining. The Pesh. follows the Targ.

closely in xx 9. But in vi 11, the Pesh. moves in an entirely different direction from the already diverse MT, LXX and Targ. renderings. First, the ראת at the beginning of the verse is read as a second person feminine pronoun, presumably addressing Jerusalem (from verse 8). Then, מלאתי and נלאיתי are read as second feminine singular forms (after the pattern of ii 19, 20?) with the result: "And you have been filled by the fury of the Lord and you are weary." Finally, this is followed by two imperatives: ("Measure it out and pour it . . ."). The imagery envisioned in שפך does play a determinative role on the preceding verb in this case, and a verb of the same Semitic root as כול is utilized, though the metaphor is not the containing of wine or grain, but its measurement before dispersal.[86] It is significant, however, that the Syriac reflects the relation between these verbs whereas this relationship is ignored in the other ancient versions.

It should be noted at this point that while the two phrases which we have been considering in vi 11a and xx 9c are in essence parallel, xx 9 contains the additional phrase וְלֹא אוּכָל . יכל is generally encountered in BH as part of a phrase often containing an infinitive or other verbal form.[87] However, on a number of occasions it does occur alone as is the case here.[88] BDB suggests that the phrase here should be read as if the infinitive is implied from the previous phrase but not repeated (as in Gen. xxix 8; Exod. viii 14; Isa. xxix 11; Jonah i 13).[89] This may, indeed, be

the case and the line would then read: "I tire myself to contain it; I am not able (or I cannot)," However, in each of the other occurrences of this grammatical phenomenon the impact of יכל in the negative is to directly contradict an affirmative declaration or command. For example, in Exod. viii 14, "the magicians tried . . . <u>to bring forth</u> gnats, <u>but</u> they could not." Or in Jonah i 13: "the men dug their oars into the water <u>to return</u> to land, <u>but</u> they could not." In Jer. xx 9, the previous infinitive together with the verb לאה already declares imminent failure. Rather than contradicting an affirmative, וְלֹא אוּכָל confirms the failure.

An alternative understanding for יכל may be gleaned by reflecting on the three other times that it appears in Jer. xx 7-11. Each time it is without a complementary verb. In verse 7, it appears in reference to God when Jeremiah declares that: "You have overpowered me and you won" (וַתּוּכָל חָזָקְתָּ). Jeremiah declares God's strength and superiority. He is stronger and he, therefore, triumphed. In verse 11, Jeremiah affirms the opposite result on behalf of his enemies: רֹדְפַי יִכָּשְׁלוּ וְלֹא יְכָלוּ ("my pursuers will stumble and lose," literally: "not win"). Verse 10 is the plotting of the enemies concerning Jeremiah and employs a pronoun with לְ : אוּלַי יְפֻתֶּה וְנוּכְלָה לוֹ ("perhaps he will be seduced/corrupted and we can triumph over him"). This last grammatical construction is also employed in the two parallel occurrences where God promises Jeremiah that,

although his enemies will fight against him (וְנִלְחֲמוּ אֵלֶיךָ), "they will not triumph over you" (וְלֹא יוּכְלוּ לָךְ --Jer. i 9 and xv 20; see also Jer. xxxviii 22). Thus, we are given the possibility that Jeremiah's statement in xx 9c should be read in light of these related phrases and should be translated: "And I cannot triumph!" or "I can't win!" Jeremiah would then be echoing in the negative what he declared about God in verse 7. God has triumphed and Jeremiah must fulfill his calling. But when he speaks out (verse 8), God doesn't seem to follow through and Jeremiah is ridiculed. And when he is silent, God's word burns within him and he grows weary containing it. He cannot win! He cannot triumph over God (and reverse God's victory) nor can he gain victory over his predicament.

The versions are mixed in their interpretation of this phrase, though none reflect this possibility specifically. LXX adds an infinitive to read: "I am not able to endure" (οὐ δύναμαι φέρειν). Janzen categorizes this as a doublet after Ziegler, though this could represent a transposition similar to the Vulg.[90] In both the LXX and the Vulg. the final phrase is read as requiring an infinitive and the infinitive is taken from the previous phrase. The prophet cannot endure. The Targ. and Pesh. both read with the same ambiguity as the Hebrew. In fact, the Targ. which does include modifying phrases in the related verses (either ל + pronoun in xx 7, 10; i 19; xv 20 or an extra infinitive in xx 11), chooses here to be limited

to an exact translation of the Hebrew without clarification. Neither Rashi nor Kimchi makes a comment.

We may now summarize. The prophet has a keen awareness of the difficulty of his prophetic task. He is called to proclaim the visions and oracles with which he has been endowed as a warning to his people. But he can find no receptive audience for God's word (vi 10). And when he does speak he is personally ridiculed (xx 8) and shunned from fellowship (xv 17). The only solution which seems readily available to ease his dilemma is to compromise his vocational calling and to quit speaking. After all, he cannot really speak anyway if no one will listen. And, furthermore, he does not want to speak if it means continuing personal abuse. But God's endowment--the prophet's calling and the words which have been placed in his mouth--does not fade just because the prophet decides not to exercise it. Rather the visions and oracles intensify. They are the very חמת-יהוה and זעם which are growing in Yahweh as well and moving him to judgment and devastation of his people. The specific oracles through which Jeremiah experiences God's wrath are demanding verbalization. The זעם/חמה burn within him like a fire, compelling him beyond his frustration and ability to withstand. He cannot contain the words. His own solution to his dilemma, rather than bringing him resolution and peace, only brings more internal struggle and weariness. So Jeremiah finally realizes that only one course of action

remains for him. He must speak even if no one will/can listen. He must speak even if he is persecuted. He must fulfill his calling and be obedient to God's command.

The "Word of Yahweh" and the Self-Disclosures

"The Word of Yahweh" is the chief idea-complex upon which Jeremiah's vocational self-understanding and legitimation was based. The first twenty-five chapters alone are full of evocative verses and phrases which illustrate this point. In the face of the prophetic orthodoxy of his day, Jeremiah battled constantly with questions raised by others concerning his authority and with internal self-doubt and despair which came as he tried to grasp the mystery of his lonely vocation. Although the office which he was expected to fill and the forms and traditions which were his to use came at first glance from the same sources as the other prophets of his day, his vocation was distinctly different from theirs. The only way in which he could understand this difference and could continue to preach with confidence was by realizing that the "word of Yahweh" was far more definitive for his life than the socio-religious expectations which surrounded him. It was the "word" which marked his personal encounter with Yahweh more clearly than anything else. The effect of the word on the prophet was both exhilarating and devastating, becoming the source of both his identity and his agony. But at least it was real--so real, in fact, that he could not

escape it. The experience of receiving and articulating God's word was the proof for Jeremiah that God had called him. He did not perceive it as a word which was ambiguous or hard to hear, but rather as a word which was inescapable, penetrating his being to the core, and causing him to feel some of what God felt. As a consequence, the antithesis between word and spirit as a criterion for validating the true prophet still had meaning for Jeremiah. The prophets of the spirit were attached to the normative Jerusalem Yahwism, which was the cultural mark of the "true" prophet. But in his emphasis on the "word," Jeremiah harkened back to a criterion for legitimacy which he believed had a more objective and verifiable basis as a credential than that which the cultic prophets were employing.

The self-disclosures of Jeremiah are reflections of the prophet's struggle with the word--expressions of the suffering which he experienced as he received the word, articulated the word, was persecuted because of the word, attempted to understand the word, and in the end discovered that he was possessed by the word in such a way that he could not escape its burning reality. Since it was the "word of Yahweh" which was fundamental to the Jeremiah's vocational understanding and process of legitimation, and since his self-disclosures chronicle his struggle, I must conclude that the self-disclosures were intended not merely as an expression of the internal struggles of the man, but also as an attempt to portray the prophetic vocation in a

new light. They were intended as a corrective to the prophetic orthodoxy of the late 7th century.

AN UNDERSTANDING OF PROPHETIC VOCATION:

The Call Narrative of Jeremiah i 4-19

The Call Narrative of Jeremiah forms the introduction for the entire book. In it we find a conflation of the orthodox view of the prophetic vocation along with the Jeremianic correction. Thus, the literary stage is set for the struggles which ensue throughout the self-disclosures between the orthodox view and a new understanding of the prophetic vocation. Through the traditional genre and imagery which is employed, Jeremiah is presented in chapter i in the context of a traditional role, but with a vocation which will be based on the "word of Yahweh," will prove demanding, will be full of opposition and rejection, and will ultimately be a departure from the socio-religious view of the day. The "call narrative" not only provides a starting point for the book in the credentials of Jeremiah, but it is an indication of the importance which the issue of prophetic vocation will have in the book.

It is interesting that in the elaboration of the central core of the narrative, the issues emphasized are those of prophetic vocation: origin, scope, process of inspiration, relation to God's activity, efficacy/authority, and the basic message. The focus is on the vocation rather

than on the issue of authority *per se*. Had Jeremiah or his redactors wanted to emphasize Jeremiah's authority, some statement regarding the final outcome of his life/prophecy would have been in order. As it is, chapter i establishes a backdrop against which the drama of Jeremiah's vocation and his message is played. No prophetic oracles, birth narratives, etc., precede this chapter. The issue of prophetic vocation including the prophet's suffering is central.

Jer. i 4-19 is a complex and difficult passage as its varied treatment throughout the history of exegesis demonstrates. The text critic, theologian, form critic, historian, source critic, and others find in it an abundance of material of special and significant interest. Conclusions as to its *Sitz im Leben*, authorship, history of formulation, intent, relationship to other biblical and extra-biblical materials, and theological background are diverse, and hence, even the rather more objective exegetical issues have not found consensus. Heeding this warning from the history of exegesis, Jer. i 4-19 is not a passage which can be approached casually or over-confidently. Perhaps, therefore, it is helpful that it stands at the very beginning of the Book of Jeremiah, reminding the exegete of the caution and humility with which the entire book should be approached.

While a more detailed analysis of the construction and genre of the passage will be pursued below, some preliminary

observations must be made. First, all of Jer. i forms a rather obvious preamble or introduction to the book as a whole. It is set apart from the chapters which immediately follow it by its more specifically biographical (or autobiographical) content, by its dialogue form, and by its inclusion of both prose and poetry blended together in a section which consciously aims at thematic unity. Each of these elements reoccurs elsewhere in Jeremiah, but none reappears again for a number of chapters, thus immediately isolating chapter i and highlighting these characteristics. Chapter ii launches directly into a series of prophetic oracles written in poetic form without so much as an historical note of reference.

A second preliminary observation: despite its unified purpose of introducing the book in its final form to its readers/listeners, Jer. i may be broken into readily discernable sections. These sections may be distinguished initially by the occurrence of various introductory formulae. For example, i 1 opens with the epigraph דִּבְרֵי יִרְמְיָהוּ (cf. Amos i 1; Isa. i 1) introducing a statement of historical context in vss. 1-3. In vss. 4, 11, and 13 the common prophetic formula וַיְהִי דְבַר-יהוה אֵלַי appears introducing sections in vss. 4-10, 11-12, and 13-16. Finally, the formula וְאַתָּה תֶּאְזֹר מָתְנֶיךָ used frequently in the context of commissioning (see below) introduces the section, vss. 17-19. Sections may also be delimited in this chapter by noting the relationship between the prose

sections and the poetic elements. The mixture of prose and poetry may indicate a later reworking of genuine Jeremianic material. It seems quite impossible to reconstruct a history of the text. Do the visions belong here or were they originally elsewhere? Do the visions, written in prose, relate to the historical Jeremiah? All we can do with any alacrity is to try to determine how all of the elements function in their present context. Verses 1-3 are clearly prose, but verses 4-10 are basically in poetic style. There are those who would deny the existence of any poetry here,[1] though it seems clear that at least the statements attributed to God (vss. 5, 7, 8, 9/10) are cast in poetic form.[2] Vss. 11-14 are clearly prose, while vss. 15, 16, and 17-19 again include poetic elements.[3] Finally, the content of these various sections generally supports the distinctives of form, although it is at the level of content that chapter i is most specifically unified. Verses 1-3 introduce the historical framework of the entire book. Verses 4-10 describe the initial "call." Verses 11, 12, and 13-16 describe two visions which seem to augment the call/commissioning sequence. The visions stylistically belong together, although, as we shall see, it is possible that the first vision should be read as part of a description of the prophetic office (vss. 4-12) while the second vision should be included as part of the description of the proclamation (vss. 13-19).[4] Verses 17-19 may be entitled "commissioning." I must again emphasize that the

clarity of the boundaries delineating all but the first section relies on the combined witness of the introductory formulae, of the occurrence of poetry and prose, and of the content. After the initial presentation of historical background, the chapter has been blended together in such a way that even the more disparate elements are meant to be viewed as a part of the whole. Therefore, any interpretation of chapter i must consider it in totality--an introduction to the Book of Jeremiah comprised of several recognizable but related parts.

Jeremiah i 4-8

Verses 4-8 form the central core of the entire "call narrative" and contain all of the general elements establishing Jeremiah within his office. There is a predetermined purpose for Jeremiah's existence. God's call is framed specifically as a disclosure of what is already established and an encouragement to be obedient to that reality. There is also an authenticating purpose in these verses. Jeremiah is given a "title" which identifies him with a long line of those who have spoken "the word of Yahweh."

The call of Jeremiah is introduced in verse 4 by the formulaic expression וַיְהִי דְבַר-יהוה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר ("The word of Yahweh happened/came to me, saying:"). The phrase is repeated in verses 11 and 13 (here with the addition of the word שֵׁנִית) as well as in ii 1 in this exact form. This

formulation and variations of it, each employing הָיָה with דְּבַר-יהוה and most frequently designating the receiver of the word with אֶל , appear sixteen times in all in Jeremiah i-xxv alone and some 85 times throughout the Old Testament.[5]

Peter Neumann has analyzed all of the occurrences of the formula with special emphasis on those in Jer. i-xxv. He points out that from earliest usage the phrase reflected the receipt of the word by a prophet (the word "prophet" here used in the widest biblical sense of the designation). The one exception is in I Kings vi 11 where it introduces an oracle addressed to Solomon. In general, when the phrase is employed in the earlier materials (as well as in Jeremiah), it designates a private oracle relating to the destiny of the prophet (as in I Kings xvii 3f., 9f.), or a bit of information about God's activity in someone else's life which is of interest to the prophet (as in I Sam. xv 10 and I Kings xxi 28). This usage is seen in contrast to more specifically judgment oracles introduced by כֹּה אָמַר יהוה .

Neumann divides the variations of the phrase in Jeremiah into three types which he designates as: "Type A" הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר הָיָה דְּבַר-יהוה אֶל-אֲשֶׁר הָיָה cf. i 2; xiv 1; "Type B" אֶל-יִרְמְיָהוּ מֵאֵת יהוה לֵאמֹר cf. vii 1; xi 1; xviii 1; xxi 1; xxv 1; and "Type C" which is the form under discussion here and which appears in i 4, 11, 13; ii 1; viii 3, 8; xvi 1; xviii 5; xxiv 4.[7] He then proceeds to ask whether these different types appear as mere stylistic variations or whether there is, in fact, an undergirding principle

relating to their use. He concludes that "Type C" may be distinguished from the other two both grammatically (utilizing the waw-consecutive narrative verbal element and the first person singular pronoun with אֵל)[8] and contextually. Following Zimmerli[9] he designates "Type C" as Wortereignisformel (or WEF) while "Types A and B" are Wortgeschehensformeln (WGF). Where the WEF is employed, the passages are predominantly prose (with the exceptions of i 4-10 and i 13-16, which included both poetry and prose, and ii 1-3) and may be characterized as private oracles to or dialogue with the prophet. In the case of Jer. xiii 1-11 and xviii 1-6, the formula is used in passages relating to symbolic actions which the prophet is commanded to take. In each passage the phrase appears twice, firstly introducing the command to action and secondly introducing the interpretation of the action. In Jer. xxiv 1-10 as well as in Jer. i the formula appears in connection with "visions" through which God's word is revealed to the prophet.

From his analysis, Neumann goes on to draw several conclusions which, I believe, inflate the structural significance of the formula. For example, he concludes that Jer. ii 1-3 belongs to Jer. 1 13-19 (as i 11, 12 belongs to i 4-10) and serves to show that i 13f. is not Yahweh's final word on Jerusalem. This relationship between these sections is not at all clear exegetically, and it seems just as likely that the occurrence of the WEF in ii 1 is simply due to the influence of its repeated appearance in chapter i.

However, Neumann is quite right in emphasizing throughout his lengthy article the way in which this phrase highlights the importance and dynamic power of God's word which suddenly "happens" to the prophet and brings concrete changes into his life.[10] He is also right in indicating that when the phrase occurs in Jeremiah it relates to a private audience between God and the prophet which either changes the course of the prophet's life or offers him further insight into the nature of the events which are to follow.

One cannot read Jer. i without being deeply impressed by the intense relationship between Jeremiah and God's word. The book is described as the "words of Jeremiah" in i 1, but these are words which specifically relate to the word from God himself (cf. i 2f., 9). LXX is so concerned that the derivation and authority of the book not be compromised that the phrase "the words of Jeremiah" in verse 1 is glossed with τὸ ῥῆμα τοῦ θεοῦ, ὃ ἐγένετο ἐπὶ Ιερεμίαν ("the words of God which came to Jeremias"), although this is not followed by the other ancient versions.

The ambiguity of the phrase "the word of God came/ happened to me" leaves the exact process of transmission a mystery. Mowinckel makes clear that he believes that all of the prophets' experiences were inner experiences. When they employ this vague expression, he says, ". . . they do so precisely in order to express this inner perception of the coming of Yahweh's word, without, of course, having given a

thought to psychological whys and wherefores."[11]

But one thing that is clear about Jeremiah's receipt of God's word is that it did not occur only as a fiat of God or a unilateral expression. What is introduced by the phrase "the word of Yahweh came/happened to me, saying" is in reality a dialogue between God and Jeremiah.[12] Jeremiah listens, responds, and is responded to in the course of the revelation. This is important because it sets the stage for the on-going dialogue between God and prophet which is revealed throughout the Book of Jeremiah. At times it is difficult to differentiate the speakers, but we should always be aware that the appearance of a formulaic phrase relating to the receipt of God's word does not preclude the possibility of dialogue.

It is perhaps in response to the apparent contrast between the seemingly unilateral character of the introductory phrase and the dialogue which follows which has influenced the LXX in verse 4 to omit the word λέγων and to change the pronoun from the first to the third person. Another possibility (and perhaps more likely) is that LXX of verse 4 has been influenced by the introductory verses which read as a third person narrative. In either case, the LXX is not permanently persuaded, for it reverts to a translation which follows MT in verses 11 and 13 (though ii 1 is altered significantly).

Verse 5 stands in the position of God's primary statement concerning his relationship to Jeremiah. It is beautifully structured to emphasize three elements: 1) the time of Jeremiah's election; 2) the activity of God in the establishment of his vocation; and 3) the title of his position.

1. The time of Jeremiah's election is emphasized by the parallel phrases בְּטֶרֶם אֶצָּרְךָ בַּבָּטֶן and וּבְטֶרֶם תֵּצֵא מֵרֶחֶם in lines 5a and 5b respectively. As the first words which are emphasized as a part of the call narrative, these have the effect of deemphasizing the issue of the precise temporal setting of the "call." If Jeremiah's vocation is established before he even has a differentiated identity, then whether he became aware of his call earlier or later in his life is of less importance than the fact that the issue has been settled by God's choice and not the prophet's. Jeremiah's vocation is declared to him, not as a possibility requiring his decision in order for it to become operative, but as a fact of his identity as a unique individual. Whether the prophet's awareness of his vocational identity came to him early in life as the narrative purports, or whether this awareness grew in his consciousness and was only later given verbal definition, is perhaps an important biographical detail, but these phrases make it clear that it is a detail which does not have abiding significance for the author. What matters is God's understanding of the prophet and not the process of his self-understanding.

The first phrase reflects a time before Jeremiah's conception. אֲצַוֶּרְךָ is an anomalous form which in the K^{e}tîb appears to be derived from the root צוּר meaning "to fashion, delineate."[13] This root was apparently understood by the Pesh. which reads ܐܨܘܪܟ (root ܨܘܪ). The Kᵉrê אֲצָרְךָ simply indicates the waw of the K^{e}tîb to be superfluous, and clearly establishes the root as צר' . Of course, this confusion is of little consequence anyway, since, as Kimchi points out, the meaning is the same in either case. צר' is a word frequently used in the context of divine creative activity. The man is said to have been "formed of the dust of the ground" (וַיִּיצֶר יהוה אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאָדָם עָפָר מִן-הָאֲדָמָה) in Gen. ii 7 much as a potter fashions the clay (cf. Jer. xviii 4, 6). Deutero-Isaiah typically uses צר' in reference to the formation of Israel as a people (Isa. xliii 1, 21; xliv 21; xlv 9, 11; lxiv 7; xliv 2, 24). The language employed in relation to Israel and in relation to the Servant of Yahweh is identical to that used here: יֹצְרִי מִבֶּטֶן ("who formed me from the womb" -- Isa. xlix 5); וְיֹצֶרְךָ מִבֶּטֶן (Isa. xliv 2, 24). God establishes himself as Jeremiah's creator. Jeremiah thus stands in relation to God as a pot to the potter. The pot bears the shape fashioned by its creator, and God knows the "shape" of Jeremiah's life and vocational destiny even before Jeremiah's form is "cast" in his mother's womb.

The parallel phrase in line 5b has in view the in utero time frame. Here Jeremiah is being "fashioned" by God but

has not yet been born. The terminology employed is not unusual in describing birth. However, it is interesting that it is this precise idiom which again appears in Jer. xx 18 where Jeremiah raises a lamentation concerning the tension which he feels within his vocation.[14] The phrases echo one another and highlight one of the major themes of Jeremiah's self-disclosures in chapters i-xx: "Before you came forth from the womb, I dedicated you. I appointed you as 'prophet to the nations'" (i 5). "Why did I ever come forth from the womb to see distress and torment, so that my days will come to an end in shame?" (xx 18). God had established the direction which the prophet's life would take. Jeremiah does not question God's right to do so, but he laments the fact that his life as a prophet seems so meaningless when the only results which he can see are destruction for those to whom he prophesied and pain for himself.

Thus, we note in these parallel phrases of i 5 the emphases on God as creator and on birth as the moment when an individual begins his unique course through life. But the overarching emphasis in both phrases is the preposition בְּטֶרֶם , which rings like the heavy beat of a march cadence. God has been at work in the life of the prophet even <u>before</u> his creation or the beginning of his life. This call does not come as an afterthought to the mind of the creator, but has been inherent in his action all along.

2. We now move on to the three verbs which are used to

describe the activity of God in the establishment of Jeremiah's vocation. These occur as parallel forms (perfect tense with second person, masculine, singular, pronominal suffixes) in parallel positions at the end of each of the lines. Each of the verbs is fairly common, though each is used in a rather technical or specific sense here.

The first of these verbs (found in line 5a) is יְדַעְתִּיךָ ("I knew you") from the very common root יד' which has a broad and rich usage in the Old Testament.[15] In reference to individuals it most commonly means "to be acquainted with." Where God is involved there is a sense of thoroughness implied in this knowledge. For example, in Job xi 11 God "knows false men" without having to investigate them. Since Jeremiah has not even been created, an application of this meaning to the first line yields a sense of foreknowledge. God is acquainted thoroughly or intimately with Jeremiah long before his advent. This is the sense which Rashi gives to the line. And Kimchi attributes a similar interpretation to his father, whom he quotes as saying, "He who created the four foundations knew him in the strength of his potentiality, and afterwards he brought him forth in actuality (or implemented him)."

Another understanding of the verb is derived from its use in Amos iii 2a which reads רַק אֶתְכֶם יָדַעְתִּי מִכֹּל מִשְׁפְּחוֹת הָאֲדָמָה Here יד' must have the sense of "to choose" or "to elect" (and, hence, "you only have I chosen from all the families of the earth"), since God certainly has a thorough knowledge

of all the nations. It is possible that this same meaning is reflected in Hosea xiii 5: אֲנִי יְדַעְתִּיךָ בַּמִּדְבָּר בְּאֶרֶץ תַּלְאֻבוֹת ("I chose you in the wilderness, in the land of drought"). Here the reference would be to the covenant which God made with Israel which was the formalization of his election of her. The imagery reflects the intimate knowledge of the consummation of a marriage union. Verse 5 in Hosea thus is meant to contrast with verse 4 where the Lord reminds Israel that "you were not to know (or "to choose") any god except me, for there is no saviour besides me."[16] If we apply this meaning to Jer. i 5a, the emphasis shifts from foreknowledge to election, which reads more congruently with the other two verbs, both of which also relate to the process of election. The Targum also reflects this interpretation with אַתְקֵנְתָךְ ("I established/ordained you"), although this is probably not as much an interpretive point as a reflection of a misreading of the Hebrew or the reading of a corrupt text which has transposed two letters (יְעַדְתִּיךָ rather than יְדַעְתִּיךָ).

The second verb (found at the end of line 5b) is הִקְדַּשְׁתִּיךָ from the root קדשׁ (H). Most commonly this root is used in the O.T. to designate that someone or something is set apart for some special function. The dedication is to the Lord and is performed by men. In four instances, God himself is the object of the action by men, and here the sense is that God should be regarded with suitable awe as the "holy Other" (cf. Num. xx 12; xxvii 14; Isa. viii 13; xxix 23). In ten

passages (not including Jer. xii 3 which is in the form of an imperative), God is the subject of קדשׁ (H) as is the case here. Six of these refer to his choosing of the Temple as the place where his Name will dwell. In Num. iii 13 and viii 17, God indicates that "every first-born among the sons of Israel" belong to him. They have been chosen for a special task, but in their place God will utilize the Levites (cf. Num. iii 12 and viii 18f.), who will belong to God and be given (נתן) as gifts (or "given ones" נְתִנִים Num. viii 19) to the people to serve at the tent of meeting and to make atonement on behalf of the people. In Zephaniah i 7 the prophet states that God "has consecrated his guests" (הִקְדִּישׁ קְרֻאָיו) in preparation for the "day of the Lord." The emphasis again is on the fact that God has chosen and that those involved are considered special.

From these occurrences it seems likely that the meaning of קדשׁ (H) in Jer. i 5 should also center on the idea of being chosen and considered as special in God's eyes. The emphasis does not seem to be on an act of separation as in the case of Jer. xii 3 which is the only other instance of קדשׁ (H) in the book of Jeremiah. God is not isolating Jeremiah, but choosing him--electing him--and calling him into a special relationship with himself. All of this has taken place before the prophet was born. Like the "first-born" of Israel, who belong to God uniquely at the moment of their birth, so Jeremiah also is in a special position not of his own choosing nor even requiring any

confirmation on his part. It is an accomplished fact of his identity. Berridge is no doubt correct in relating this to the phenomenon reflected in Deut. vii 6 and xiv 2: "For you are a holy people (עַם קָדוֹשׁ) to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen (בָּחַר) you to be a people for his own possession (עַם סְגֻלָּה)."[17] The emphasis is on the special relationship which the people have to God by virtue of God's act of choosing them and identifying them with himself. Also, we should note here the similarity of this thought with that expressed in the Servant Song of Isaiah xlix: יהוה מִבֶּטֶן קְרָאָנִי מִמְּעֵי אִמִּי הִזְכִּיר שְׁמִי ("Yahweh called me from the womb, from the womb of my mother he named me"--Isa. xlix 1 cf. also Jer. xv 16); יֹצְרִי מִבֶּטֶן לְעֶבֶד לוֹ ("He formed me from the womb to be his servant"--Isa. xlix 5).[18]

The third verb employed is נְתַתִּיךָ from the very common root נתן (2007 times in the O.T., cf. BDB, 678-81). The appearance of קדשׁ (H) and נתן (Q) together in Num. viii 19, as noted above, where the Levites are chosen and then given to a specific task, forms an interesting parallel with this passage. However, the precise meaning of נתן here seems to be "to appoint" or "to present," which more easily accommodates the double accusative construction. This sense of the verb is readily seen elsewhere in contexts where a specific person is being designated to a task.[19]

Thus, all three verbs, which are used here to emphasize strongly the action of God in the life of Jeremiah, serve to emphasize the prophet's election. He is established in his

vocation, not through his own decision, but through a unilateral and definitive decree of Yahweh which took place before Jeremiah even existed (except in the mind of the Creator).

3. Finally we come to the phrase נָבִיא לַגּוֹיִם ("prophet to the nations") which occurs in line 5c like the title of an office. The phrase has generated a great deal of discussion though the history of exegesis due to the description לַגּוֹיִם .

גּוֹיִם is a frequent term in Jeremiah, appearing 39 times in this plural form.[20] Unquestionably its reference is to the nations of the world in a much wider context than Israel and Judah. Thus Jeremiah's title designates a broad scope of ministry. The question of the nature of this ministry to the gentile world forms the crux of most of the discussion. The Targum reflects the early Jewish sentiment that a prophet of God should have no official relationship to the gentile nations with the exception of proclaiming their destruction. Therefore, the phrase is expanded and the task carefully delimited: "I ordained you as a prophet to give the gentiles a cup of cursing to drink." Rashi goes further in denying that Jeremiah had any responsibility to the gentile nations. Appealing to the definition of the prophet in Deut. xviii 15, he finds that God's promise was to raise up a prophet <u>for Israel</u> and "not for those who deny the Torah." Rashi then explains that the term גּוֹיִם must refer to Israel "who were conducting themselves like

gentiles." Some of the medieval manuscripts of the LXX eliminate the wider scope of the prophet's mission by substituting the singular ἔθνος for ἔθνη .[21] Of more concern to most commentators is whether Jeremiah can legitimately hold the title of "prophet to the nations," especially if the "oracles to the nations" are assigned to a source other than Jeremiah. If he cannot hold this title, then this is used as evidence against Jeremianic authorship of the call narrative. But arguing against this line of interpretation, I would suggest that the title is entirely appropriate for the prophet. First, while the designation "prophet to the nations" subsumes a wider scope of activity, it does not exclude Israel or Judah. Repeatedly Jeremiah employs the singular form גּוֹי in reference to Judah (cf. v 9, 25; vii 28; ix 8; etc.). Furthermore Jer. xviii 7-11 clearly applies the vocabulary of the assigned functions of the prophet "over the nations" (עַל-הַגּוֹיִם) in i 10 to the specific case of Judah. Second, it should be pointed out that Jeremiah did concern himself with the nations (as did Amos, Isaiah, Ezekiel, etc.), even if the "oracles to the nations" are excluded as evidence.[23] It was not unusual for a prophet of Israel to assume an international perspective. In Jer. vi 18 the prophet turns his cry from the people of Judah who will not listen toward the nations who are called to observe the punishment which God will bring: לָכֵן שִׁמְעוּ הַגּוֹיִם ("Therefore, hear, O nations!"). In Jer. xxv 30ff., Jeremiah is commanded to prophesy against "all the

inhabitants of the earth" . . . "because the Lord has a controversy (a rîb) with the nations." Leslie points out that Jeremiah lived in an age of international "clash, realignment, and transition in the ancient Near East."[24] His prophecies, even those directed to Judah, are full of this international awareness and, therefore, it is no exaggeration to call him a "prophet to the nations." Third, as a prophet of Yahweh, Jeremiah is identified with God in a special way. Indeed, in Jer. xv 16, he declares that he has been called by God's name. One of the epithets of God which occurs in Jer. x 7 is מֶלֶךְ הַגּוֹיִם ("King of the nations"), and repeatedly God's sovereignty over all the nations is affirmed. Therefore, it should not seem unusual that the epithet of Yahweh's prophet should be "prophet to the nations." Fourth, even as Jeremiah was identified with God's international identity and concerns, he was also identified with his people who had always had an international commission. It was through Israel that blessing was to go to the nations. Vriezen has pointed out that Jeremiah's election corresponds closely with Israel's election, "for Israel was only elected in order to serve God in the task of leading . . . other nations to God. In Israel God seeks the world."[25] Berridge sees this close link between prophet and people emphasized in the vocabulary of election (with יָדַע), consecration (with קָדַשׁ), and task.[26] Finally, it should be pointed out that a title generally reflects the scope of the task assigned to an

office, but not necessarily the time priority which belongs to any one task within the whole. Therefore, it is not appropriate to question the legitimacy of the title simply because Jeremiah's prophetic proclamation was primarily directed toward his own people. Any international assignment would have qualified him for the title, especially when considered along with his continuing reflections on the international situation.[27]

To summarize, in verse 5 God is pictured as presenting Jeremiah with a definition of his life--with an explanation of who he is. He is a "prophet to the nations." His vocation is seen as an integral part of his being. Jeremiah was elected for this role before his creation and this election determined how he was "fashioned in the womb." This is not a call for Jeremiah to become a prophet, but a call that he recognize the inherent meaning of his existence--that he recognize that he is a prophet. Such a view is unique among the "classical" prophets who relate something of their call experience. Kimchi reflects at length on this fact, referring to Rabbi Moshe bar Memon who wrote that this preordination was the case for every prophet. There was the "essential nature in the root of his frame," yet each also had a need for preparation. God did not affirm this specific fact to any prophet other than Jeremiah, because he "knew that Jeremiah would refuse the commission. God knew him--that he was prepared to prophesy from the womb--so he encouraged his heart (by saying so) to

respond to the commission of God." Whereas God used great signs (like the burning bush) to encourage the hearts of others, he used this information to encourage Jeremiah.

God's call that Jeremiah recognize his vocational identity immediately brings an objection on the part of the prophet. While God's statement is in beautifully structured verse form, Jeremiah's statement now comes in simple, direct prose, consisting of an exclamation and a two-fold objection.

The exclamation אֲהָהּ אֲדֹנָי יהוה ("Oh, Lord Yahweh!") is typical for Jeremiah, appearing in i 6; iv 10; xiv 13; xxxii 17.[28] In each case it occurs in a prose passage. In iv 10 and xiv 13, it is used by the prophet as an introductory phrase, when the prophet seeks to call God's attention to some fact which he believes God has overlooked in the immediately preceding pronouncement. For example, in iv 9 God decrees that the leadership of Judah will be appalled when he brings the final destruction, and in iv 10 Jeremiah objects, saying that it was surely God who deceived the people into their false sense of security. The exclamation is somewhat equivalent to saying, "Wait, Lord! What about . . .?" In the case of xxxii 17, the phrase is used as introductory to Jeremiah's prayer of affirmation after his purchase of a field in Anathoth. There is no evidence from these other instances in Jeremiah that the phrase marks a lament, as Rashi indicates, or that it is

even an appeal with overtones of pain and anxiety, as Kimchi suggests, although the phrase is used elsewhere in the O.T. for these purposes. Furthermore, Reventlow's suggestion that the phrase indicates a divine epiphany, on the basis that the phrase also appears in the Gideon "call" narrative as an exclamation marking a divine epiphany (cf. Judg. vi 22), seems quite unlikely.[29] In Gideon's case the appearance of an "angel of the Lord" is a carefully described, integral part of the narrative. Here it is not.

Rather, the phrase seems to be used as elsewhere in Jeremiah almost as a form of interruption. Jeremiah is eager to present God with information which he does not feel has been adequately addressed in God's decree--information which runs contrary to the facts as God has presented them.

The ancient versions reflect a varied understanding of the emotional content of the exclamation. The LXX translates rather directly and dispassionately with Ὁ ἐὼν δέσποτα κύριε , while the Vulgate emotionally punctuates the exclamation by repeating the particle three times: A, a, a, Domine Deus . . . Clearly the Vulg. is reading a note of anguish in the phrase. Both the Pesh. and Targ. employ entreaty forms, the Syriac with the simple interjection حدده صنا للهل ("'I pray you' Lord God"), and the Aramaic with a longer, carefully respectful קַבֵּיל בָּעוּתִי יוי אֱלֹהִים ("Listen to my prayer, Lord God"). Neither of these formulations suggests intense emotion or anguish, but rather a simple interjection as might be customary during the

course of a dialogue.

Thus it seems likely that Jeremiah's initial response to God's revelation of vocation should not be read as if the prophet were overly dismayed. Rather, the prophet requires an additional explanation relating to the disparity which he feels between the implications of the title "prophet to the nations" and his current situation.

His immediate condition is described in two phrases. The first is הִנֵּה לֹא-יָדַעְתִּי דַבֵּר ("Behold I do not know how to speak"). This is translated in a straightforward manner in all the ancient versions, although the Targ. characteristically substitutes לְאִתְנַבָּאָה ("to prophesy") for the more general "to speak." The grammatical construction is fairly common (cf. Jer. vi 15). Jeremiah indicates that he does not possess the skill to function as a spokesman for God. His reluctance at this point reminds us of Moses' objection in Exod. iv 10: "Please, Lord, I have never been a man of words . . . for I am slow of speech and slow of tongue." Again Moses comments on his ineffectiveness in speaking in Exod. vi 12: ". . . How then will Pharaoh listen to me, for I am unskilled in speech?" (lit.: "Uncircumcised of lips"). Indeed, as Holladay has pointed out, the connection between Moses and Jeremiah in this area has been frequently made throughout the history of exegesis.[30] But whereas Moses' complaint specifically suggests that he has a long history of feeling inarticulate, no such suggestion is made here. Jeremiah was aware of the strong content and

often eloquent form which the proclamations of prophets like Hosea contained. Without the ability and skill to speak in this fashion, the fact that God had established him as a prophet was of little consequence. His was a legitimate concern. What he knew of himself to date was not fully supportive of what God was intending. Commentators have also suggested the similarity between this phrase and Isaiah's objection at the time of his call in Isa. vi 5: "Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips. . ." Nicholson suggests that all three accounts (Moses, Isaiah, and Jeremiah) are parallel and conform to a "stylized pattern."[31] Indeed, there may be limited truth in this analysis (see below), but the dissimilarities are as striking as the parallel elements. Isaiah's concern is with his worthiness in the face of theophany. His comment about his lips relates more to his sinful condition in general, than to his ability to speak for Yahweh, since no mention is made of any prophetic role until verse 8. In contrast, Jeremiah's comment does not indicate any feeling of unworthiness or hesitancy to be in dialogue with God. Jeremiah simply does not feel equipped.

This conclusion is further emphasized by the final phrase, כִּי-נַעַר אָנֹכִי , although the term נַעַר requires interpretation. In a majority of instances נַעַר refers to a young boy or youth with the emphasis on age. That could certainly be Jeremiah's point here. He is only a boy.

Indeed, the LXX seems to support this interpretation by employing the comparative adjective νεώτερος ("younger") in its rendering. The Vulgate employs the term puer which is used until a boy's seventeenth year.[32] And the Syriac renders נַעַר with ܛܠܝܐ, which commonly refers to a child from 7 - 11 years of age.[33] Furthermore, the term נַעַר is utilized in only one other place in the Book of Jeremiah, namely 1i 22, where it is specifically contrasted with זָקֵן. Leslie indicates that the term means that Jeremiah was under 20.[34] Skinner notes that it must refer to Jeremiah's age, since his call came before his renunciation of marriage for the sake of his vocation, and early marriages were the rule in the ancient Near East.[35] Thus it is quite possible that Jeremiah is making an allusion to his age. The appearance of this word in the verse directly following a reference to birth certainly leads the reader in that direction. But the question still remains as to what he is implying by the statement. Is he saying, "Lord, I'm too young for this heavy responsibility?" Kimchi rejects this notion by pointing out that it would not be surprising for prophecy to come from a youth, since Samuel first prophesied when quite young. A more substantial argument against this interpretation is that it does not effectively take into account the previous phrase, which refers to a lack of necessary equipment for the task and not to a fault of the present circumstances. Since the two phrases are connected by a -כִּי, marking a dependence between the clauses (rather

than a ו construction marking two independent clauses), their relationship must be taken seriously.

While Rashi also assumes that נַעַר is an indication of Jeremiah's youth, he suggests that Jeremiah is saying, "Lord, I lack credibility because I am young." He argues his point by indicating that Moses had already built a great reputation of esteem among the people by the time he was called to chastise them close to the time of his death. He had performed a great variety of miracles, thus establishing his credibility. But Jeremiah had none of this background. His very first mission was to involve reproof of the people. This same line of interpretation is found in the Targum, which no doubt influenced Rashi. Here the text of this phrase is interpretively expanded as Jeremiah's lament concerning the weight of his early responsibility: "Behold, I am a boy, but from my beginning I must prophesy distress and exile against this people." The problem with this interpretation is again that it does not adequately account for the previous phrase.

A third way to understand Jeremiah's comment is that by it he is indicating his lack of essential equipment. Here an interesting parallel can be found in I Kings iii 7 where Solomon prays: "And now, O Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David; yet I am but a little child: I do not know how to go out or come in" (וְאָנֹכִי נַעַר קָטֹן לֹא אֵדַע צֵאת וָבֹא). The grammatical construction is remarkably similar to that employed by Jeremiah. Even

though Solomon uses the more diminutive term נַעַר קָטֹן , he is not referring primarily to a problem of age. Scholars generally agree that he must have been at least 20 at the time of his accession even though Josephus indicates (partially on the basis of this self-description) that he was only 12. Certainly he was too old to be described as a "little child." The rest of the line explains that he does not know how "to go out or come in," which is an idiomatic expression relating to the pattern of living wisely and responsibly (cf. Ps. cxxi 8; Josh. xiv 11; II Sam. iii 25; II Kings xix 27 = Isa. xxxvii 28.). Solomon essentially is saying that he is inadequately equipped to do that to which he finds himself assigned. He does not have the necessary experience. His subsequent request is for an understanding and discerning heart--a request which God readily grants. Berridge suggests that Jeremiah knew Solomon's prayer and that this was an established form of humility which constituted a confession of dependence on Yahweh.[36] Whether this specific link exists or not is impossible to determine with only these two possible examples of "an established form." Nevertheless, the emphasis certainly fits the context of Jer. i 6. Like Solomon, Jeremiah finds himself in a position of awesome responsibility created by God's claim upon his life. Jeremiah does not hesitate to proceed with his vocation because of timidity,[37] or an overwhelming sense of unworthiness (as in the case of Moses and Isaiah),[38] but rather because of a sense that he does not

yet possess all the essential "equipment" of his trade. He feels young, inexperienced, and inadequate in the area of basic skills.

In addition to the discussion above, there remains a variety of other interpretations, most of which are generally resonant with this view, in that the emphasis is on Jeremiah's sense of lacking something which is essential to the fulfillment of his call. For example, Kimchi and others note an alternative application of the term נַעַר to people who are servants or personal attendants without regard to age.[39] Kimchi cites Exod. xxxiii 11 as an appropriate example. In this case the phrase emphasizes Jeremiah's lack of authority rather than his inexperience. A servant must defer to his master for the word of authority, and Jeremiah would be indicating that he did not possess any institutional authority. Wimmer suggests that God's reply to Jeremiah's objection supports this understanding since God transfers authority to the prophet by providing him with authoritative words.[40] Indeed, as we shall see, verse 10 also portrays God as providing a position of authority for Jeremiah because he bears God's word. Authority, or the right to speak, comes as a consequence of God's provision of the equipment to speak.

One further interpretation of נַעַר is that it refers to an unmarried man (cf. Gen. xxxiv 19). Again the interpretation of the clause in this case relates to a certain social authority or acceptability which the prophet

would lack in the Hebrew culture where marriage was normative.

The question remains as to whether Jeremiah's objection was a valid one. Some scholars view the verse more as an outburst of anxiety very much like Moses' excuses rather than as a legitimate objection.[41] Often they cite God's statement in verse 7 as a rebuke against Jeremiah's lament. However, if my interpretation is correct, this verse is not framed as a highly emotional lament, but rather as a considered objection. Jeremiah is soberly aware of the general implications of God's declaration in verse 5, and he is aware that he is not yet fully prepared to exercise his vocation. He is not attempting to withdraw from God's stated purpose for his life, but he is determined to assess seriously what is necessary for him to fulfill that purpose. And, as we shall see, God heeds Jeremiah's objection and provides him with the equipment which he needs.

Verse 7, which is again in poetic form, provides the beginning of God's response to Jeremiah's objection. In the verses which follow, God provides further gifts, equipping Jeremiah for the exercise of his vocation. But first he assures Jeremiah that the fact of his limited preparation has not been overlooked.

The verse opens with a simple statement indicating a dialogue: וַיֹּאמֶר יהוה אֵלַי ("And Yahweh said to me"). It is noteworthy only because of the contrast which it presents

with the more ambiguous phrase in verse 4. Throughout this passage three general types of phrases are employed in reference to God's revelatory activity. The first, which appears in verses 4, 11, and 13, has already been discussed. The second, appears here, as well as in verses 9, 12, and 14. The third, נְאֻם-יהוה , which commonly occurs in prophetic oracles, appears in verses 8, 15, and 19, and will be discussed below. וַיֹּאמֶר יהוה אֵלַי appears thirteen times in Jeremiah, all in the first 25 chapters.[42] In each instance, with the exception of this verse and possibly verse 9, the phrase appears in prose passages, perhaps indicating that it is a characteristic of the later editions of the early Jeremianic poetic materials. In chapter i, the phrase appears each time in the central position of the dialogue units, each of which is initially introduced by the first type of phrase (see verses 4, 11, 13). In every case where the phrase appears in Jeremiah it is in the context of personal dialogue. God is instructing Jeremiah personally in what he should do or concerning some important information.

Here God proceeds to counteract Jeremiah's hesitancy of verse 6. He begins by telling Jeremiah that he is not to say "I am a youth." The inflection with which we choose to read this command largely depends upon our understanding of God's intent in this phrase. We can read it harshly, as though God is rebuking the prophet, but there are no other indications that God is angry (as is the case in Exod. iv

14). Rather, God seems to be challenging the logic underlying Jeremiah's previous statement. Jeremiah had said that he did not know how to speak <u>because</u> he was a "youth," i.e. inexperienced, young, inadequate. God does not contradict the fact of Jeremiah's inability, but does indicate that it is not solely because of his existential situation. The reason Jeremiah has not yet spoken is because he has lacked God's appointed opportunity and God's dynamic word. If God's statement is to be taken as a rebuke, it is certainly a mild one, rather like saying, "There is no reason to make excuses, Jeremiah. I've not yet finished my part in your preparation."

Thus God proceeds in his successive statements to answer Jeremiah's hesitancy and to reassure him, not by dealing with his youth and inexperience directly, but by supplying what was still God's to give in Jeremiah's preparation. The two statements which conclude verse 7, should not be read as reflecting a divine compulsion or coercion.[43] The prophet is not being goaded against his will, but rather is being reassured that what God began in his life even before his birth, God would also bring to fulfillment by providing all that was necessary to be a "prophet to the nations." The tone is not that of an irrevocable command, but rather that of a gracious provision.

The first promise, עַל-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר אֶשְׁלָחֵךְ תֵּלֵךְ , contains a a grammatical ambiguity which is reflected in the ancient

versions. Bright points out that the prepositions ל and אל are frequently interchanged in Jeremiah, and, thus, the prepositional phrase could legitimately mean "upon whatever I send you . . ." or "to whomever I send you . . ." or "wherever I send you . . .."[44] Bright opts for the first of these, translating: "For you'll go on what errands I send you . . ." The LXX reads πρὸς πάντας οὓς ἐάν ἐξαποστείλω σε ("before whomsoever I dispatch you") which is also followed by the Vulg. (ad omnia quae mittam . . .) and the Pesh. (ܠܟܠ ܕܫܕܪ ܐܢܐ ܠܟ). The Targ. again departs by reading לְכָל אֲתַר דַּאֲשַׁלְחִינָךְ ("to every place I will send you"). Unfortunately, it is not clear whether the Targ. is actually interpreting the phrase as it stands in BH as "to every place," or whether the rendering has been influenced by the similarity of אשר and אחר . Nevertheless, Kimchi follows the Targ. and explains it by noting that "the prophetic word came to him at first in Anathoth, but God wished to send him to Jerusalem. . ." Rashi, on the other hand, reads the phrase as "to whomever," suggesting that this refers to "the heathens," but that the next line refers only to Israel. This is consistent with his view (stated in his commentary on verse 5) that prophets were not raised up to speak to "deniers of the Law." In my opinion, no preference can be given to any of these three possible translations from the evidence of this verse alone. However, in verse 8 the phrase "Don't be afraid of them" (מִפְּנֵיהֶם) is a possible indication that it is the audience to which God is sending

Jeremiah which is in view. Therefore, it seems to me most appropriate to translate this phrase in verse 7 as "Everyone to whom I send you. . ."

The two promises at the end of verse 7 do not require much explanation apart from the foregoing comments. They are entirely appropriate to the occasion of a prophet's commissioning, in that it is well established that two of the primary characteristics of the prophetic office are that the prophet is sent by God and that he speaks for God. Indeed these are characteristics of anyone or of any group which is commissioned as a representative. This last assertion can be supported by observing the various verbal parallels to these statements which are found elsewhere in the Old Testament. In Joshua i 16, Joshua has commanded the officers of the people to act as his representatives to prepare the people for the conquest ahead. They then respond to Joshua by saying, "All that you commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go" (כֹּל אֲשֶׁר-צִוִּיתָנוּ נַעֲשֶׂה וְאֶל-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר תִּשְׁלָחֵנוּ נֵלֵךְ:).[45] Certain verbal affinities may also be seen in the call narratives of Judg. vi (cf. especially vs. 14: "Go . . . and deliver . . .Have I not sent you?) and Isa. vi (cf. especially verses 8, 9: ". . . Who shall I send? And who will go for us? . . . Go and say to this people . . ."). On the basis of these latter examples many commentators have identified these verbs as typical of the call narrative Gattung, though Berridge is probably correct in asserting that the better parallel with

Josh. i 16 is good evidence that these verbs were typically used for commissioning in a variety of contexts.[46] Within Jeremiah there are a number of passages with verbal and/or content parallels often expressing a negative appraisal of false prophets.[47] Positing the positive appraisal for the true prophet, it is easy to see the importance which being "sent" and "commanded" had for the prophet. Nicholson indicates that xxiii 25-32 reflects an exilic disillusionment in prophecy.[48] But his conclusions reflect faulty exegesis. The intense ambiguity of chapt. xxiii reflects the certain belief that the prophet has been sent and commanded to speak the דבר-יהוה, but that he does so in a situation where there is no good criterion for authenticating the truth. Jeremiah's assertion that other prophets are false is based on his own call experience.[49]

In connection with the final clause, וְאֵת כָּל-אֲשֶׁר אֲצַוֶּךָּ תְּדַבֵּר ("and whatever I command you, you shall speak"), many commentators have drawn a connection wtih Deut. xviii 18, the final phrase of which reads: וְדִבֶּר אֲלֵיהֶם אֵת כָּל-אֲשֶׁר אֲצַוֶּנּוּ ("and he will speak to them all that I command him").[50] The suggestion is that there is a definite dependence between these passages. This issue will be dealt with more fully where it reappears in connection with verse 9, but suffice it to say at this point that such a specific relationship is not at all necessary given the other readily available examples of this type of terminology appearing in other commissioning contexts.[51]

To summarize verse 7, I have indicated that God is not rebuking Jeremiah for his comment of verse 6, but rather offering an alternative explanation for Jeremiah's sense of inadequacy to fulfill his vocation. He also reassures the prophet. God indicates that two things are yet needed to activate Jeremiah's inherent vocation. The first is an occasion to exercise the vocation, and to this God now says that he will provide the situation and will clearly send Jeremiah into it. The second is a message to speak, and again God says that this will be provided. The repetition of כל in the last two phrases emphasizes the sufficiency of God's provision in these two areas. Jeremiah's role now begins to emerge as basically needing to obey God's directives. He does not need to decide about his vocation, nor is he required to perceive through his own wisdom and experience in what circumstances and with what message he should respond. Reponsibility for these details is assumed by God. But faithful obedience, no matter what the cost, is required of Jeremiah.

It is precisely in relation to the possible, personal cost of obedience that God now turns in his address to Jeremiah. To this point, the issues with which the dialogue has dealt have related specifically to the definition and exercise of the prophetic vocation. Now, however, a new element is introduced, namely the response which the practice of the vocation may elicit and the effect of that

response on the prophet.

The verse opens with the command אַל-תִּירָא מִפְּנֵיהֶם ("Do not be afraid of/because of them"). The negative jussive in this form is very common in the Old Testament as an introduction by God to a promise of either protection or deliverance.[52] In many instances, God's promise is explicitly grounded on the fact of his continuing presence. He is there. Therefore, nothing can harm those with whom he has a relationship.

In the second phrase, כִּי-אִתְּךָ אֲנִי לְהַצִּלֶךָ ("for I am with you to deliver you"), this assurance of God's presence and his intention to provide help is clear. Other examples of this type of promise are by no means scarce in the Old Testament,[53] nor within Jeremiah.[54] It must be pointed out, however, that Jeremiah's formulation of the phrase is unique. In all five occurrences, the Hiphil infinitive of either נצל or ישׁע or both are employed in connection with "I am with you." And in each case, נְאֻם-יהוה also appears in relation to the entire phrase. Berridge states that ". . . although this construction obviously constitutes a valid indication of Jeremiah's personal hand, the formulation was probably already known to Jeremiah."[55] He gives as evidence for this assertion that the roots נצל (H) and ישׁע (H) occur together in three further passages, namely Pss. vii 2, xxxi 3, and lxxi 2, and that each case is in the context of a lamentation of the individual. He goes on to draw the conclusion that it is likely that the

combination of these words is rooted in the lamentation/ salvation oracle Gattungen and that verse 8, therefore, "provides us with the surest evidence of the fact that the salvation oracle Gattung has been used by Jeremiah in his formulation of 1.4-10."[56] It is true that this phrase is in the form of an affirmation which is a part of the salvation oracle Gattung, but the unique character of the formulation in Jeremiah and the frequency of other formulations of the promise of Yahweh's presence outside recognized salvation oracles, provide substantial evidence that the phrase here does not necessarily depend on the Gattung.

חלץ (H) itself appears nine times in Jeremiah and consistently refers to being delivered from the power of the wicked, violent, or abusive. In fact, only in i 8, i 19, and xv 20 where the root appears in this particular formulation, is the prepositional phrase "from the hand/power of . . ." (מִיַּד) not used to complete the statement of deliverance. Jer. xlii 11 includes the fullest formulation of Jeremiah's typical usage: אַל-תִּירְאוּ מִמֶּנּוּ נְאֻם-יהוה כִּי-אִתְּכֶם אֲנִי לְהוֹשִׁיעַ אֶתְכֶם וּלְהַצִּיל אֶתְכֶם מִיָּדוֹ׃ ("'Do not be afraid of him,' declares the Lord, 'for I am with you to save you and to deliver you from his hand.'").

In Jer. i 8, it is clear that danger is in view. In his assurance that he will be with Jeremiah to deliver him, God also warns him in a general way of the opposition which he will face. But the command is that he is not to fear. Even as God will provide the occasion and words for his

prophetic role, he will also provide protection from ultimate harm. But this is not promise or assurance that the message will be accepted or that the messenger will be honored because of his special relationship with God.

Nicholson suggests that verse 8 is possibly an editorial expansion inserted in light of the safe completion of Jeremiah's ministry.[57] In spite of the threats and attempts on his life, none was successful. I find no compelling reason to follow Nicholson at this point. The three-fold repetition of this assurance in i 8, i 19, and xv 20, seems to be an indication that Jeremiah needed and received repeated reminders of this assurance, and that God understood that this would be a point of internal tension for the prophet. Other examples in the Old Testament demonstrate that this type of assurance was typical in the face of future uncertainties. The fact that God's promise to Jeremiah was fulfilled does not of necessity argue that this statment is to be regarded as a reflection on past faithfulness of God, unless one makes the a priori assumption that predictive revelation is not phenomenologically tenable or that this entire passage belongs to a later period. Gerstenberger argues that the same stereotyped form of the full phrase in different passages compels us "to attribute it to some editorial hand."[58] But, again the argument is superficial, since it is just as likely that if any of the occurrences belong to a later editor these could have been borrowed from authentic, early Jeremianic

material. Verse 8 fits this context well, and there is no good reason to question its authenticity.

The ancient versions are fairly straightforward in dealing with verse 8, except for the Targum which provides a characteristic circumlocution for "I am with you" by rendering it "my word is at your side to keep you safe" (בְּסַעֲדָךְ מֵימְרִי לְשֵׁיזָבוּתָךְ cf. also Targ. of i 19 and xv 20). This is done apparently to preserve God's attribute of transcendence.

At the end of verse 8 we come to what we have identified as the third type of phrase which marks God's revelatory activity in this passage. נְאֻם־יהוה is characteristically used throughout the prophetic material to mark that which is to be regarded as authentic "utterances" or oracles of Yahweh.[59] Jeremiah, who utilizes the expression 87 times in the first 25 chapters alone, provides some insight into its authenticating function in xxiii 31, which states: "Behold, I am against the prophets--declaration of the Lord (נְאֻם־יהוה)--who use their own speech (tongue), and 'utter an utterance' (וְיִנְאֲמוּ נְאֻם)." The construction of the verse is awkward, complicated by the fact that this is the only occurrence of נאם as a verb. It is little wonder that the ancient versions reflect some confusion. Nevertheless, the sense seems to be that God is against those who speak messages originating with themselves, yet deliver them in a form which conveys the impression that they are from Yahweh.

Jeremiah may actually be coining the verb נאם from the noun here in order to emphasize this point.[60] Ezekiel is even clearer in simply stating that the false prophets only see false visions and lying divinations and yet they say "utterance of Yahweh" (נְאֻם-יהוה --Ezek. xiii 6, 7). Although the phrase נְאֻם-יהוה is most often rendered as a verbal expression ("says the Lord"; "declares the Lord"; etc.), נאם is more precisely a noun in construct relationship. Thus the phrase, more literally translated as "utterance of Yahweh," has the effect of punctuating the material of which it is a part with an emphatic, authoritative designation. As is also most common in modern translations, the ancient versions render it verbally. The fact that this designation is always present in those passages similar to verse 8 in Jeremiah (though in different locations suggesting that it was not merely a part of a sterotype formulation) is an indication of the import placed on statements of this kind. In its location at the end of verse 8, it has the effect of concluding God's three statements of assurance with a note of authority. God has promised to provide all that the prophet will need in the exercise of his vocation. What follows is the first fulfillment of one of the promises with a specific provision.

Jeremiah i 9-10

In verse 9, God substantially provides Jeremiah with

that which is central to the prophetic vocation, namely God's words. Here is the fulfillment of what Jeremiah sensed that he lacked in his comment of verse 6, but could not rightly define.

The verse opens with the anthropomorphic phrase וַיִּשְׁלַח יהוה אֶת יָדוֹ ("and God sent forth his hand"). Rashi correctly identifies the common idiomatic expression "to send forth the hand" as meaning in every instance "to extend the hand" (cf. II Sam. xxiv 16; II Kings vi 7; Gen. viii 9: xxii 10; Exod. iv 4; Judg. xv 15; Ezek. x 7; Job xxx 24; and many more). However, Rashi proceeds in his comment to try to eliminate the anthropomorphism by reading with the Targum, "And Yahweh sent the words of his prophecy . . ." וּשְׁלַח יי יָת פִּתְגָמֵי נְבוּאָתֵיהּ Kimchi, sharing this common concern of the medieval commentators (and, indeed, much of traditional Jewish exegesis), also tries to explain away the anthropomorphism by reinterpreting the phenomonological aspect of the verse and saying that God appeared "as an angel to him and spoke to him in the name of the Lord." There is certainly precedent for the identification of a messenger of the Lord with God himself elsewhere in scripture (cf. Gen. xviii, etc.), but there is no indication that this is the case here. Perhaps, as Leslie suggests, the phrase should be considered as the "vision phase" of Jeremiah's call as is the case in Ezek. viii 2,3, or even Ezek. ii 9 which reads: "Then I looked, behold, a hand

extended to me; and lo, in it was a scroll" (וָאֶרְאֶה וְהִנֵּה-יָד שְׁלוּחָה אֵלַי וְהִנֵּה-בוֹ מְגִלַּת-סֵפֶר).[61] In Jer. i 9 the phenomenon is not elaborated, but it is clear that Jeremiah perceived a direct intervention by God in his life. What took place was initiated by God and unavoidable by the prophet. The language used has reflexes in other passages where "the hand of the Lord" is connected with specific prophetic endowment (cf. Ezek. i 3; iii 14; xxxvii 1; xl 1; I Kings xviii 46; Isa. viii 11.) When Jeremiah recounts this instance (or a similar one) in xv 16ff., he again uses the imagery of God's hand (cf. sv 17b) to describe the event.

The next phrase, וַיִּגַּע עַל-פִּי ("and he touched my mouth"), describes the complementary action. Numerous commentators have drawn the connection between these words and those which are a part of Isaiah's call (especially Isa. vi 7: "And he touched my mouth-- וַיִּגַּע עַל-פִּי --and said, 'Behold this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away, and your sin is atoned for'"), stating that the motif is the same and suggesting that Jeremiah was even familiar with the Isaiah passage.[62] Although the similarity of language makes such assertions tempting, the situations described are quite dissimilar. The touch which Isaiah receives is from a burning coal which is administered by "one of the seraphim" rather than a touch from the "hand of God." More importantly, Isaiah's touch is one of cleansing, a response to his exclamation of a guilty conscience (cf.

Isa. vi 5), while Jeremiah's touch is one of endowment. In fact, as Hopper points out, the remarkable aspect of this touch is "the absence of any guilt consciousness in Jeremiah's account of it."[63] In my opinion, the similarity of language between these phrases in Jeremiah and Isaiah are simply a coincidence. We might just as easily draw attention to the terminology which appears twice in the ancient prologue of Job (i 11 and ii 5) wherein "the Accuser" commands God saying: "Put forth your hand now and touch his bone and his flesh. . ." (ii 5: אוּלָם שְׁלַח-נָא יָדְךָ וְגַע אֶל-עַצְמוֹ וְאֶל-בְּשָׂרוֹ:). The language utilized is an appropriate choice for describing a specific intervention by God into the life of a person.

Habel and others connect verse 9 with the "sign" section of the "call Gattung" which is illustrated by Exod. iii 12 and Judg. vi 17ff.[64] Again, however, careful examination does not substantiate this identification. In both Exod. iii 12 and Judg. vi 17ff. the "sign" is specifically designated as אות and is an event quite apart from the task being commissioned or from any special endowment. This passage bears far closer resemblance to Ezek. ii 8ff., which also deals in a special way with specific endowment and can be viewed as somewhat parallel to Jer. xv 16 as well.

In the final line of verse 9, God explains his actions: וַיֹּאמֶר יהוה אֵלַי הִנֵּה נָתַתִּי דְבָרַי בְּפִיךָ ("And Yahweh said to me, 'Behold I have put my words in your mouth'"). The

phrase is not an unusual one in connection with prophetic endowment, occurring in similar form in Num. xxii 38; xxiii 5, 12, 16 (in connection with the Balaam oracles); Deut. xviii 18; Isa. li 16; and Jer. v 14. It also occurs in Exod. iv 15 where Moses is instructed to put words in Aaron's mouth, since Aaron was to be designated as spokesman for Moses on the analogy of God's messenger (cf. vs. 16). Wherever the phrase occurs (even in the interchange between two people, cf. Deut. xxxi 19 and II Sam. xiv 3, 19) the sense is that a specific message is given which is to be subsequently delivered. In the case of prophetic endowment the message consists of the dynamic word of God.

Mowinckel, in his interesting article "The 'Spirit' and the 'Word' in the Pre-Exilic Reforming Prophets," points out that the basic reality of prophetic consciousness was דבר יהוה, rather than רוח יהוה which was apparently associated with the extreme ecstatic manifestation of an earlier period.[65] The "Spirit" is wholly lacking in Jeremiah as in the vast majority of the pre-exilic classical prophets.[66] Where it could occur a variety of euphemisms are used instead,[67] and where it does occur (as in Deutero-Isaiah) it never stands for prophetic endowment.[68] There is even the possibility that the use of רוח in Jer. x 13 is meant to contrast derisively with דבר : וְהַנְּבִיאִים יִהְיוּ לְרוּחַ וְהַדִּבֵּר (וְהַדָּבָר) אֵין בָּהֶם ("The prophets are but wind [spirit?] and the word is not in them").[69] The "Word," says Mowinckel, is seen by the prophets as full of content: "It

is a real active force, a potency which Yahweh can 'send forth' and which can 'descend upon' a people with devastating effect. (Isa. 9.7)"[70] Isaiah lv 10, 11 portrays the "Word" as going forth from God's mouth and always accomplishing what is intended. The fact that God controls his words and that they are "given" suggests that they have an existence quite apart from the prophet's reasoning. At times, Jeremiah must wait for the word to come (e.g. Jer. xlii 1-7; xxviii 7f.). At times, Jeremiah must wrestle with the word (e.g. Jer. xv 16ff.; xx 7-9). Martin Buber observes that the divine word "breaks into the whole order of the word world. . . .[It] suddenly descends into the human situation, unexpected and unwilled by man, is free and fresh like the lightning. And the man who has to make it heard is over and over again subdued by the word before he lets it be put in his mouth."[71]

Many commentators have directed attention to the close similarities between Deut. xviii 18 and Jer. i 7, 9, and 17, suggesting that Jeremiah is here identifying himself with Moses (Holladay), or that these verses were edited by a Deuteronomist who regarded Jeremiah as standing in the succession of Moses (Nicholson).[72] Some point out that it is only in Deut xviii 18, Jer. i 9, and Jer. v 14 that the verb נתן is utilized in the presentation of God's words, and that in all other cases it is שׂים which is employed. But Berridge discredits the significance attached to the distinctive occurrence of these two common verb roots as

evidence of a close relationship by pointing out how easily נתן and שום can be interchanged (cf. Lev. xx 3, 5, 6 which use the roots alternatively within a set formula).[73] While some relation to Deut. xviii 18 no doubt exists, it seems more likely that it is a general relationship based on the conceptual paradigm of God's powerful word, which I have noted was an extremely influential concept in the late pre-exilic period, rather than a more specific relationship of direct influence.

In summary, verse 9 describes the first instance of a substantive equipping of Jeremiah. While his vocation was established before his creation, as reflected in i 5, the special gifts which would make the practice of his vocation possible were still lacking. Rather than being inate, these had to come from outside his being--from God himself. Here God provides the prophet with his words. They are described as coming through a special intervention by God and they have a substantive reality of their own. God's words do not seem to come to the prophet through a slow reasoning process, but they are suddenly to be found in his mouth, ready for articulation. This is not to say that a pattern of ecstatic prophecy--of prophecy which seems to flow automatically from the lips of a consciously passive person--is being established here. The very emphasis upon the דבר יהוה rather than the רוח יהוה precludes this possibility. Rather the description is meant to highlight that the words do not originate in the prophet's own

reasoning, imaginings, or dreams.[74] Rather, Jeremiah perceives that the words for which he will be the messenger have a concrete, tangible reality originating in God.

In verse 10, God affirms that Jeremiah is given authority along with the ability to speak for God. In equipping Jeremiah with his words, God has supplied a necessary qualification if Jeremiah is to be "a prophet" (verse 5), and now God declares that these same words also establish his authority to fulfill his role "to the nations" (verse 5).

The verse opens with the imperative רְאֵה ("See!"). Wherever this is used elsewhere in Jeremiah (ii 10, 19, 23, 31; iii 2; v 1; vi 16; vii 12; xiii 20; xxx 6; xl 4), the command is that one is to become aware or to take note of an accomplished or inherent fact. Thus, the construction here indicates that the right of authority has already been given. Yet the time referent, הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה ("this day"), is an indication that the authority has just been given. Authority has been given along with God's words--it is an inherent by-product of possessing God's words. God wants Jeremiah to take note specifically of this implication of what has happened to him.

הִפְקַדְתִּיךָ (root פקד H.) has a rather specialized use in the Old Testament referring to the appointment of one who is in authority.[75] It's use in Jeremiah xl 7, 11 and xli 2, 18, in reference to Gedaliah's appointment to rule Judah,

also makes this clear. Kimchi perceives the strength and rather official sounding nature of the phrase, and explains that this terminology is used to highlight the authority of what the prophet may say. "'See I appoint you,'" Kimchi comments, "means 'I appoint you as an official and trustee (פקיד) over them for good and for evil. For whenever you prophesy concerning them, thus it will come to pass concerning them.'" Thus the emphasis is not merely on an assignment to accomplish a task, but on a position of authority. Of all the ancient versions, the Pesh. captures this meaning best in rendering the phrase: "See, I have put you in authority (ܫܠܝܛ ; ܫܘܠܛܢ) this day . . ."

The extent of authority is described by the phrase -ל֙ הַגּוֹיִם וְעַל-הַמַּמְלָכוֹת ("over nations and over kingdoms"). I have already noted in the discussion of verse 5 that הַגּוֹיִם in Jeremiah refers to the nations of the world in a wider context than Israel and Judah. Similarly הַמַּמְלָכוֹת is also used in reference to the kingdoms of the world. The question here is whether these terms are also meant to include Israel/Judah. The Targ. indicates that Israel is not included. But since the prophet can only pour judgment upon the gentile nations (cf. Targ. verse 5), the Targ. adds the phrase "and over the house of Israel" before the final two constructive infinitives.[76] The other ancient versions shed little light on this question. Kimchi indicates that Israel is included in the designation, but he sees that the doubling of the terminology of destruction suggests that,

while Israel will receive both bad and good oracles, those addressed to the nations will primarily be bad. But he partially disagrees with the Targ. by noting that, while Jeremiah speaks very few good things about nations other than Israel, there are at least two instances where he does (Jer. xlix 6, 39). As in the case of verse 5, there seems to be no pressing reason to exclude Israel from this designation. Furthermore, Jer. xviii 7-10 utilizes five of the six infinitives appearing here specifically in reference to Israel. It is true that Jer. xviii 7-10 is a part of a prose passage which may be of later origin and specifically influenced by Jer. i 10, but even if this is the case, it is still good evidence that at a very early time Israel was regarded as being included in verse 10.

What follows God's statement that Jeremiah should take note of the role to which he has been appointed in relation to the nations is a series of infinitives which describes the specific activities which will be involved. This series is not unique to this verse, but is repeated with variations in xviii 7-10, xxiv 6, xxxi 28, xlii 10, and xlv 4.[77] From an initial evaluation of these occurrences some immediate generalizations can be made. First, in each instance other than i 10, Yahweh is the subject declaring that he will undertake these actions. Second, in each instance other than i 10, the object of the action is the house of Israel and the house of Judah or the land connected with them. In the case of xviii 7-10, where it is the "house of Israel"

(vs. 6) which is being addressed, the verbs are included in a context which is meant to sound like a general principle. God declares, "At one moment I might speak concerning a nation or concerning a kingdom (עַל-גּוֹי וְעַל-מַמְלָכָה) . . ." Third, in each instance other than i 10 the series is a part of a prose rather than poetic passage. Fourth, in each series both the destructive and constructive terms are included. Variations occur in the addition or deletion of verbs from the "destructive" list.

From these generalizations we are led to certain observations regarding i 10. First, this verse is unique in its utilization of a series which is itself unique to the Book of Jeremiah. Undoubtedly the various occurrences of the series have had an influence on one another throughout the process of writing and transmission, but this verse must be regarded as a somewhat special case. It is possible, for example, that as poetry, perhaps written early in Jeremiah's career, the series here became the paradigm for the others.[78] Second, the occurrences of the series elsewhere make it obvious that the actions described here were generally associated with Yahweh. The fact that Yahweh assigns them in this instance to the prophet underlines the identification of the prophet with the activity of God and reenforces the investiture of authority in the prophet by virtue of his possession of God's words. In one sense, we might say, that the word which Jeremiah would proclaim would not only inform but also accomplish the message which it

contained.[79] If this was Jeremiah's understanding of God's assurance to him here, it is little wonder that he was confused by the seeming lack of authority and efficacy of his proclamation later.[80]

A third observation regarding verse 10, which partially grows out of an evaluation of the other occurrences of the series, relates to a textual problem. In the LXX of verse 10, הרס is omitted from the translation, leaving five verbs rather than six. This, along with the rather obvious chiasmus of the first and last pairs of infinitives and the occurrence of similar chiasmatic pairs in xxiv 6, xlii 10, and xlv, 4 has persuaded many scholars to delete the middle pair of infinitives.[81] They then offer a variety of explanations for how they came to be a part of the text, generally revolving around the influence of the other expanded series, i.e. xviii 7-10 and xxxi 28. Janzen, for example, argues that הרס was an intrusion influenced by xiv 6 and xxxi 28 and that אבד (H) was a secondary expansion from xii 17 and xviii 7. He then suggests that the Greek was also revised secondarily to conform to a partially expanded Hebrew text. I find all of the arguments for deletion uncompelling, for the following reasons. First, there is no evidence in any of the ancient versions other than the LXX for a shorter text, and the absence of one of the infinitives from the Greek is far more easily explained as an accidental omission or as a simple haplography.[82] An appeal for deletion can only be made to the LXX if an

explanation is offered as to how the Greek happens to contain one-half of the pair, but such explanations are far too complex to be credible. Second, an argument suggesting that the poetry is superior if we delete the second pair and note the strong chaismus between the remaining pairs, neglects to observe that in the similar passages which contain this chiasmus (i.e. xxiv 6; xlii 10; xlv 4), הרס appears rather than נתץ as the counterpart of בנה. To be consistent, those who make this suggestion should delete the second and third infinitives.[83] Third, the three passages where the series of verbs appear in the infinitive forms (i 10; xviii 7, 9; xxxi 28) interestingly include the three longest series. In each case נתש and נתץ occur together at the beginning of the series and בנה and נטע appear at the end. In the middle there is variation: xviii 7, 9 includes only אבד (H) while xxxi 28 adds רעע in between the two roots of i 10. The similarities between these three passages suggest that, where the infinitives have been used, the longer series including a middle section reflects the earliest form of the infinitive series. No passage appears without the middle infinitive section. However, the variation between the three passages also suggests that late editors did not try to bring the lists into exact conformity, thereby allowing for early literary variation. Because of the conscious pairing of infinitives in i 10 as a part of the poetic style, it is relatively easy to posit this passage as the first, followed later by one prose

passage which deleted an infinitive and another which added an infinitive to the original list.

Let us now turn to the interpretation of the list. נוע is a root which appears only 21 times in the Old Testament, but, significantly, thirteen of these are in Jeremiah. Twelve of the occurrences (the exception is xviii 14, where it appears in the Niphal) are in passages containing other verbs of this series. Jer. xii 14-17 is the most significant because the root is used five times within these verses and because the action in view is made clear by the context. The passage concerns those whom God identifies as "my wicked neighbors" (שְׁכֵנַי הָרָעִים), presumably referring to Israel's immediate neighbors. In verse 14, Yahweh declares: הִנְנִי נֹתְשָׁם מֵעַל אַדְמָתָם וְאֶת-בֵּית יְהוּדָה אֶתּוֹשׁ מִתּוֹכָם ("Behold I will uproot them from their land and will uproot the house of Judah from among them"). The sense is that of forceful displacement. The people will be torn away from their present environment. But destruction is not in view, as the promise of being brought back (verse 15) confirms. The people will be given another chance by virtue of God's compassion "to learn the ways" of God's people and to swear by God's name (verse 16). Only if they will not listen after this final chance will God both uproot and destroy (verse 17: . . . וְנָתַשְׁתִּי אֶת-הַגּוֹי הַהוּא נָתוֹשׁ וְאַבֵּד . . . "And I will uproot that nation, uproot and destroy. . ."). It must be mentioned that, since this is a prose passage and expresses some thoughts not found elsewhere in passages

attested as belonging to Jeremiah, the date and origin is uncertain. Nevertheless it demonstrates how נתש was understood in the Jeremianic corpus from earliest times.[84] The reference is to God's act of leading people into exile. This meaning is also consonant with occurrences of the root elsewhere as in Deut. xxix 27, where the Lord is described as "uprooting" the people from their land and casting them "into another land," or in I Kings xiv 15, where Ahijah prophesies that the Lord will "uproot Israel from this good land" and "will scatter them beyond the River." The image seems entirely appropriate since נתש stands in chiastic relationship with נטע six times in Jeremiah, a verb which is used figuratively in many passages to describe God's act of settling his people in the land (cf. Exod. xv 17; II Sam. vii 10; Px. xliv 3; lxxx 9; Isa. vi 7). The image is derived from the agricultural practice of transplanting vines from one place to another as Ps. lxxx 9 makes clear: "You removed a vine (גֶּפֶן --cf. Ezek. xvii 6-10; Hos. x 1) from Egypt: You drove out the nations and planted it (וַתִּטָּעֶהָ)." Other than in Jeremiah, נתש and נטע appear together only in Amos ix 15 where the theme is the restoration of Israel after the captivity and God's promise that they will not be exiled again: "I will also plant them on their land and they will not again be uprooted from their land which I have given them. . ." (וּנְטַעְתִּים עַל-אַדְמָתָם וְלֹא יִנָּתְשׁוּ עוֹד מֵעַל אַדְמָתָם אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי לָהֶם

The second verbal root, נתץ , generally refers to the

demolition of various specific structures, such as houses (Jer. xxxiii 4), walls (Jer. xxxix 8; lii 14) altars (Judg. vi 30-32; II Kings x 27), towers (Judg. viii 9, 17), cities (Jer. iv 26; Judg. ix 45), etc. As I have pointed out above, נתץ is only found as the opposite of בנה in this type of context. However, בנה here seems to relate to "civilizations" rather than specific structures and is, therefore, clearly being used in a more figurative sense. There are two cases in the Old Testament where נתץ does have a definitely figurative meaning. In Job xix 10, Job complains that God has "broken" him down on every side (וַיִּתְּצֵנִי סָבִיב) and has "uprooted" (וַיַּסַּע) his hope. The sense is that God has fragmented Job's life, not physically, but by taking away that which has given his life coherence. In Ps. lii 7, נתץ is again used in relation to a person, though here the consequences of God's action are permanent. God will "break" the deceitful one forever and "uproot" him "from the land of the living." It is interesting to note that in both of these cases where נתץ is applied to a person, a verb related to an "uprooting" process also appears.[85] But nowhere is נתץ used in relation to the destruction of a civilization or a nation as a group of people. Presumably it could be used in this way simply by applying it collectively in the same manner as it is applied in the Job and Psalms passages. However, in my judgment, Jeremiah's use of נתץ is meant to emphasize the physical destruction of the structures of a nation, i.e. the houses,

walls and cities. Certainly this total destruction is a part of the prophet's proclamations concerning judgment. Thus the first pair of infinitives suggest the activities of exiling and then demolishing what is left. The LXX rendering of נתץ with κατασκάπτειν ("to demolish; to rase to the ground") here, supports this understanding, especially as the LXX elsewhere uses a great variety of other words to translate נתץ (e.g. καθαίρειν "to destroy; to humble"; καταβάλλειν "to overthrow"; καταλύειν "to depose; to disband, to destroy"; κατασπᾶν "to draw or pull down"; συνθλᾶν "to crush together") which are far less physically oriented.

אבד (H) appears only 26 times in the Old Testament, six of which occur in Jeremiah. A survey of all occurrences shows that it generally means "to destroy in judgment" (cf. Lev. xxiii 30; Deut. viii 20; xxviii 51, 63; Ezek. xxv 7, 16; Micah v 9; Obad. 8; Zeph. ii 5; etc.). Jer. xlvi 8 and xlix 38 also attest to this meaning. In Jer. xxv 10, it is utilized in reference to the elimination of the various sounds which are made by a civilization: the sounds of joy, the sounds of a wedding, the sounds of milling, and the sounds of spluttering lamps. While the use of אבד (H) in this passage is far more selective and figurative, it still refers to complete destruction and judgment as verses 9 and 11 make clear. In Jer. xii 17, the root appears in the Piel indicating God's final decree after his comparatively gracious action of exile and restoration.

חרס, as I have noted above, is used nearly synonymously with חמץ (cf. especially Judg. vi 25, 28), although it is employed far more frequently in those contexts which relate to the overthrow of people or nations rather than physical structures (cf. Prov. xxix 4; Exod. xv 7; Px. xxviii 5; Lam. ii 17; Job xii 14). Of its six appearances in Jeremiah, three are in chiastic relationship with בנה, indicating that it is this wider meaning of the root which Jeremiah has in mind (see above). The sense is that the fabric or stability of society, the structures of government and leadership, and the civilization itself will be overthrown.

Thus the series of infinitives begins with two pairs of verbal roots describing the complete destruction, which is God's to command and now part of Jeremiah's ministry to proclaim. Each infinitive describes a slightly different destructive element or process but all are seen as the result of God's judgment. Kimchi explains the overbalance of destructive terminology by indicating that it is appropriate considering the greater emphasis on judgment which would be a part of the prophet's oracles.

But finally we come to the constructive elements which are also a part of God's program of action. Coming at the end of the series, this pair of verbs brings a note of hope. Judgment is not God's final word and will not be the final word of the prophet either. Though the destruction of the people at times may seem imminent, yet there remains a hope

of salvation even after judgment has fallen.

I have noted above that נטע is a verb which is used from earliest times to describe God's activity in redeeming the people from Egypt and establishing them in the land. בנה is also used in the tradition to speak of the activity of God in relation to the nation, but here the references are to the establishment of the Davidic monarchy and the accompanying leadership and cultic structures (cf. I Sam. ii 35; II Sam. vii 27; I Kings. xi 38; I Chron. xvii 10, 25; Pss. lxxix 5; cii 17; lxxviii 69; cxxvii 1). The imagery in this case is to the building of a house which is figuratively related to the establishment of a dynastic family and accompanying societal structures. In Amos ix 11, the prophet speaks of the restoration in terms of rebuilding "the fallen booth of David." This phrase has given rise to much controversy, but must refer in some way to the restoration of the Davidic dynasty and empire. In choosing these two roots, Jeremiah brings together two of the central facets of the salvation-history of Israel, namely her possession of the land and her security rooted in the Davidic covenant. These are the allusions which could come to mind when Yahweh was seen as the subject of these two verbs.

But while each of these roots had a rich history separately in the imagery relating to God's activity with Israel, their previous appearances together had been firmly established as the language of human settlement. Twenty

times בנה and נטע appear together in the OT.[86] As both Weippert and Bach point out, the many early occurrences of the combination of both verbs indicate that they were part of a rather standard Sprachform.[87] In an agrarian society, the building of a house and the planting of a vineyard or orchard were two events which marked a secure and permanent settlement. Jeremiah himself uses this expression on four occasions and the meaning is clear. In Jer. xxix 5, 28 he advises the exiles to Babylon saying: בְּנוּ בָתִּים וְשֵׁבוּ וְנִטְעוּ גַּנּוֹת וְאִכְלוּ אֶת-פִּרְיָן: ("Build houses and settle; and plant gardens and eat their fruit"). His meaning, which becomes even more clear in the succeeding verses, is that the people should settle permanently in Babylon, since they would not be released for 70 years (verse 10). The fact that this one phrase is used to summarize Jeremiah's entire letter of advice in verse 28 is an indication that its meaning was readily understood. The expression is found in the negative form in the oath of the Rechabites in Jer. xxxv 7. The Rechabites are commanded not to build or to plant, but rather to live in tents and be "sojourners" in the land without permanent settlement. In Jer. xxxi 4, 5, the application of the expression begins to take on a mixed character. In verse 4, Yahweh promises: עוֹד אֶבְנֵךְ וְנִבְנֵית בְּתוּלַת יִשְׂרָאֵל ("Again I will build you, and you shall be rebuilt, O virgin of Israel!"). Here God is speaking of the restoration of Israel as a people with an ordered society. But in verse 5, the subject is the people themselves who

will "plant vineyards" or reestablish a permanent settlement on the "hills of Samaria."

In only two passages before the time of Jeremiah were these two verbs connected with Yahweh as the subject, thus suggesting a move toward the use of a common idiom in a new figurative way.[88] In Isa. v 2, the verbs appear in their normal setting, but the whole passage is an allegory relating to God's relationship with his people. And in Amos ix 11, 15, the verbs are used in their specifically figurative sense, but the verses are separated and thus we cannot designate this as a new application of the old idiom (which appears in Amos ix 14) in the strictest sense.[89] It is not until after Jeremiah, in Ezek. xxxvi 36, that we have another example of Yahweh appearing as the subject in a passage containing both verbs. Therefore, we may conclude that it was Jeremiah who first brought these two verbs together in a new way, building on the established idiom employing both verbs, but infusing them with traditional theological meanings in reference to God's activity.

Bach concludes that this final pair of infinitives formed the essential kernel around which the whole series was built.[90] He suggests that their use in Jer. xlv 4 reflects the original application: כֹּה אָמַר יהוה הִנֵּה אֲשֶׁר-בָּנִיתִי אֲנִי הֹרֵס וְאֵת אֲשֶׁר-נָטַעְתִּי אֲנִי נֹתֵשׁ וְאֶת-כָּל-הָאָרֶץ הִיא: ("Thus says the Lord, 'Behold what I have built, I am about to tear down, and what I have planted, I am about to uproot, that is, the whole land.'")[91] Here בנה and נטע refer to God's

mighty acts in the past of providing a land and establishing a dynasty. But all of that is coming to an end, and, thus, it is appropriate to use these verbal antonyms to describe God's current activity. From this stage, the final formulation of the series, which included reference both to constructive and to the destructive activity of God, was a short step, as was reapplication of the constructive terms to the restoration. What God had once done, he would do again.

While most of the ancient versions render the verse in a straightforward manner except as noted above, it is the Targ. which goes farthest afield, both in reinterpreting the application of the actions (the destructive to the gentile nations and the positive to Israel) and "flattening" the imagery of the series. This is particularly true in the rendering of Hebrew נתש with Aramaic בקע ("to establish"). The force of the background of the verb and the effectiveness of its aesthetic value is lost.

To summarize verse 10: Jeremiah is drawn into participation in God's authority and work among the nations by virtue of his possession of God's words. This work involves both destructive and constructive activities, the precedent for which is seen to be rooted within Israel's own traditions. God's word has proven efficacious in the past and now the prophet is equipped for involvement in God's current work among the nations.

Jeremiah i 11-12

In verses 11 and 12 we turn to the first of two symbolic experiences which in their present context support the affirmations that the prophet has already received from God. These verses are expressed in prose, although this alone should not make us suspicious that they were not originally part of the call experience. Indeed, the second symbolic experience, recorded in verses 13-16 appears to be a combination of both prose (verses 13 and 14a) and poetry (verses 14b-16) and we have already noted the presence of both styles in the dialogue of verses 4-10.

What does set off these verses is the repetition of the formulaic phrase וַיְהִי דְבַר-יהוה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר which we encountered in verse 4 and will note again in verse 13 (with a slight variation). As I have already suggested, this phrase is used to highlight the dynamic nature of God's word which suddenly "happens" to the prophet and in some way either changes the course of his life or offers him new insight into the nature of what is to follow. It is not at all clear as to whether this experience occurred at the same time as the prophet's first encounter with his "call," but it seems quite likely that this experience and the one which follows were identified with the prophet's call experience at a very early point.[92] Certainly the content of the verses readily supports the context. I would suggest, however, that the repetition of the formulaic introductory phrase is an indication that this experience did not occur

at precisely the same time as what now precedes it in the text, but that the "events" happened close enough together to be associated in the prophet's memory.[93]

I have used the term "symbolic experience" as an arbitrary nomenclature for what is described in these verses as well as the next section. In both cases the description sounds like the perception of an object which the prophet may have naturally encountered in his days' activities which suddenly is given a greater symbolic meaning.[94] Kimchi, however, states that this was part of the prophet's first prophetic vision (מראה),[95] an assumption which is also reflected in the Targum, which has done away with the object of nature altogether in the last line. The Targum interpretively reads: "I see a king hastening to do evil." It is tempting to suggest that the Targum must have misread the sentence, possibly understanding מקל to be מלך and proceeding to interpret from there. But the occurrence of a similar interpretive style in verse 13 (again using מלך) demonstrates the desire of the Targum to extract meaning from the text wherever possible rather than merely preserving the opaque symbol. The Vulg. also interprets the experience as a vision, though here it is due to misunderstanding the pointing of שׁקד and thus reading the phrase as an anthropomorphism: "I see a rod watching" (Virgam vigi lautem ego video).

Jeremiah himself does not give us any ready criterion for distinguishing "visions" from other "symbolic

experiences," if, in fact, such a distinction can be made. He does not utilize the term מראה , nor is the language of a passage like Jer. iv 23-26 (which is obviously a proleptic vision of cosmic chaos) significantly different than what occurs here. In both cases, the prophet employs ראה , though the form here is a participle and in iv 23-26 it is in the perfect tense-form. In Jer. xxiv 3, the phrase מָה־ אַתָּה רֹאֶה יִרְמְיָהוּ appears as it does here, again in connection with what seems to be an ordinary sight (namely, two baskets of figs) given an extraordinary significance.[96] But again there is some ambiguity as to the actual phenomenon since the whole incident is introduced by הֶרְאַנִי יהוה ("The Lord showed me"--xxiv 1). ראה (H) is used in xi 18 with reference to what seems to be a direct revelation to the prophet.

The insight or symbolic meaning which God gives Jeremiah in verse 12 is dependent upon a pun between the Hebrew for almond-tree, שָׁקֵד , and the participle form of the same root, שֹׁקֵד .[97] In reply to God's question in verse 11, Jeremiah replies מַקֵּל שָׁקֵד אֲנִי רֹאֶה ("I see a branch of an almond-tree"). Kimchi comments that the use of מַקֵּל suggests that Jeremiah had given close attention to a part of the tree in order to identify it. This was necessary because the branch was without either leaves or blossoms. He points out that the branch must have been hard to recognize since God specifically confirms the identification at the beginning of verse 12. Evidence for Kimchi's

assessment that the branch was barren may also be found in examining the uses of מַקֵּל in BH. It only appears 18 times but in each case is used to describe a smooth stick, staff, or rod.[98] This is an interesting point because it ultimately determines the interpretation of the pun between שָׁקֵד and שֹׁקֵד . If the branch which Jeremiah saw was budding rather than barren, he may have noted how early or with what haste the blossoms of the almond tree appear after the winter. It is well known that the almond tree often has blossoms (even before leaves) as early as February.[99] It is this idea of haste which may have influenced the Targum which interprets the phrase as "a king hastening/pressing on to do evil." On the other hand, if Jeremiah saw only a bare branch, but identified it as an almond tree, he would be more likely to think of the "watchfulness" of the tree, waiting for just the right moment to send forth its buds and herald the coming of spring. This, I propose, most accurately reflects the meaning of the root שָׁקַד and the sense of God's intended meaning in verse 12.[100]

Turning directly to verse 12, God affirms that Jeremiah has "seen rightly"[101] and indicates that the meaning of the symbol is: כִּי-שֹׁקֵד אֲנִי עַל-דְּבָרִי לַעֲשֹׂתוֹ ("for I am watchful over my word to perform it"). שׁקד (Q) appears only eleven times in BH, four of which are in Jeremiah. In its verbal forms it does not appear in the Pentateuch, Former Prophets or Minor Prophets at all, except as a Pual participle in Exod. xxv 33f., xxxvii 19f., where it is used to describe a

shape like almond blossoms. The more frequent occurrence in the older literature of the root in reference to the almond tree and the appearance of Aramaic, Syriac, and Ethiopic cognates only in relation to the almond tree, suggest the possibility that the noun use of the root is the older. In three instances שָׁקַד (Q) appears in parallel or conjunctive contructions with שָׁמַר (Ps. cxxvii 1; Prov. viii 34; Ezra viii 29). In each of these cases it connotes the attentive action of one who is entrusted to guard something. In Proverbs vii 34, "Wisdom" concludes her instruction with an adjuration to attentiveness: "Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching (לִשְׁקֹד) at my gates day by day, waiting (לִשְׁמֹר) at my doorway." This same quality of intent concentration is seen in Isa. xxix 20, which declares God's judgment on the tyrant, the scoffer, and "all who are intent on deceit." The person appears to be thoroughly involved with his evil. Added to this idea of wakeful attentiveness (see also Ps. cii 8) is the idea of being poised to act. In Jeremiah v 6, God's judgment is described in imagery relating to preditory animals who will tear the transgressors to pieces. In this context, the leopard is described as "watching over their cities" (שֹׁקֵד עַל-עָרֵיהֶם). The image is of one stealthily and attentively poised to attack, waiting only for the appropriate moment. This is indeed the image which was conveyed by the leopard's modus operandi as seen in Hosea xiii 7b: "Like a leopard, I will lie in wait by the road." In the three other instances (besides i 12)

where God is the subject of שׁקד , these same qualities seem to be in view. The most interesting is Jer. xxxi 28, where שׁקד occurs in relation to the same infinitive series (plus one) as that which appears in i 10. Just as God has "watched over them" (שָׁקַדְתִּי עֲלֵיהֶם), that is the houses of Israel and Judah, to destroy, so also will he "watch over them" (אֶשְׁקֹד עֲלֵיהֶם) to build. What is conveyed is the certainty of God's future action. It is inevitable that his divine purpose will be fulfilled. Yet the time has not yet arrived. God waits attentively for the appropriate moment. It will surely come, but not yet.[102] Dan. ix 14 states that "the Lord has watched over the calamity and has brought it upon us" (וַיִּשְׁקֹד יהוה עַל-הָרָעָה וַיְבִיאֶהָ עָלֵינוּ). The "calamity" is that which was "written in the law of Moses" (verse 13) and God has now "confirmed his words" (verse 12). Again שׁקד conveys the certain attentiveness of God and his utter consistency, but also that his actions have an appropriate time.

Certainly this is the sense of God's encouragement to the prophet in verses 11 and 12. God is vigilant over his word. He will perform it. The prophet can be assured that God's divine purposes of judgment and salvation will be inevitably fulfilled. Nicholson states that this theme "more than any other provides the foundation of the entire book."[103] But the idea of vigilance also carries the sense of an appropriate timing. This is an important aspect of God's assurance here, because this is precisely the area in

which Jeremiah personally struggled when God's word seemed so slow in being fulfilled. Although the almond branch continues to be barren and the winter persists, the blossoms will come forth at precisely the right time.

The LXX and Vulg. both interpret the assurance in this way by focusing on God's vigilance.[104] The Targ. and Pesh., however, interpret the phrase as God hurrying to do his word.[105] Both Rashi and Kimchi follow the Targum. Kimchi says that "God showed him an almond branch to be an allegory (מֹשל) concerning the future punishment to come upon Israel--which would come to them quickly like an almond tree hastening to blossom before the rest of the trees." If this were the correct interpretation, it is little wonder that Jeremiah was confused by the delays and felt betrayed by God when judgment seemed so slow in coming. But, in fact, this does not seem to be the sense of the Hebrew. The Targ., Pesh. and medieval commentators may well be influenced by the meaning of שָׁקֵד which appears in postbiblical Hebrew indicating haste.[106] Furthermore, it must be pointed out that the haste with which God will fulfill his word is not an emphasis anywhere in Jeremiah (in contrast with Isaiah, for example) except in xlviii 16 in relation to Moab. Rather the emphasis in the oracles is on the inevitability and imminence of the disaster.

Thus, verses 11, 12 continue God's word of assurance and encouragement to the prophet by noting still another characteristic of the divine word with which the prophet has

been equipped. God's word brings with it the authority and the right to participate in God's work (verse 10) as well as a guarantee that God himself will diligently watch over his word to assure its fulfillment at the right time.

Jeremiah i 13-16

In verses 13 and 14, the focus is changed from the general provision and character of God's words, to their specific content. Verses 13-16, thus, provide a kind of thematic summary of the message which Jeremiah is to proclaim. Another way of viewing this material is that here we have God supplying the prophet with the "occasion" for his proclamation--a summary description of God's activity and the situation in which the prophet will speak God's words. By the end of this section God has provided Jeremiah with the necessary equipment which was promised to him in verse 7 and which was necessary for the fulfillment of his prophetic vocation, namely both the words and the occasion.

Verses 13 and 14 present yet another symbolic experience--an ordinary sight which was given an extraordinary significance. The section opens with a third occurrence of the formulaic phrase וַיְהִי דְבַר-יהוה אֵלַי (as in vss. 4, 11), although here is appended the word שֵׁנִית ("a second time"). The fact that this was the third time that the "word of Yahweh came" to Jeremiah in chapter i has given rise to a number of explanations for שֵׁנִית. Many commentators have taken it as an indication that the two

visions at one time stood quite separate from this context or were later additions to the historical call.[107] Neumann suggests that שֵׁנִית indicates that there is a fundamental unity in verses 4-12 and that verses 13-19 should be regarded as a second section.[108] He is certainly right, as I have pointed out, to see some fundamental unity in the content of these sections, but his case based on the occurrence of שֵׁנִית is unconvincing. I would suggest that the easiest way to understand שֵׁנִית is to assume that the prophet is saying that this is the second time that the word of Yahweh came to him "in this way." In other words, שֵׁנִית is simply an indication that Jeremiah had two symbolic experiences, both of which were readily related to his call.[109]

Jeremiah describes what he is seeing in two phrases, again moving into a poetic form. The first phrase, סִיר נָפוּחַ אֲנִי רֹאֶה , is parallel in form with verse 11b and describes this common sight in general terms. Jeremiah is viewing a "pot" or "cauldron" being heated. נָפוּחַ is a Qal passive participle used here as an adjective (as Kimchi explains). Its literal meaning is "being blown." Both Rashi and Kimchi state that this means that the pot is boiling, and Kimchi explains that it is giving out steam because it is being fanned with fire.[110] Whether נָפוּחַ indicates that the pot is boiling or only in the process of being heated is of little final importance to the interpretation of the symbol.

The key, rather, lies in the final modifying phrase, וּפָנָיו מִפְּנֵי צָפוֹנָה . Kimchi explains that "the side of the pot from which they pour is called פנים . Thus we might translate: "And its opening is facing away from the north." G. R. Driver emends the text reading וּפָנוּי ("and it is turned") for וּפָנָיו , thus trying to clarify the phrase by saying that it is a "cauldron tilted on one side and so threatening to spill its contents that way, in this case towards the south."[111] While the picture is somewhat unclear and, hence, disputed (see Kimchi's explanation as well as his record of his father's interpretation), Driver's emendation does not seem necessary.[112] The ancient versions (with the exception of the Targ.) render the phrase quite literally. The important detail is that whatever the exact configuration of the pot, it is "away from the north."

The emphasis on the catchword צָפוֹנָה becomes evident as we turn to Yahweh's interpretation in verse 14. מִצָּפוֹן ("from the north") describes the direction from which the instrumentality of God's judgment will come and this becomes a key point in Jeremiah's proclamation.[113]

The remainder of the interpretation states: תִּפָּתַח הָרָעָה עַל כָּל-יֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ . פתח (N) occurs only here in Jeremiah, but its meaning elsewhere relates either to the act of opening or to the act of releasing. In Job xii 14, Job affirms God's power saying that "he tears down and it cannot be rebuilt; he imprisons a man, and he cannot be released

(וְלֹא יִפָּתֵחַ)." Here in Jer. i 14, God is again in control but releasing rather than imprisoning that which is also under his control.[114] It is as if the evil is under restraint until God chooses to act. But when it comes, no one will escape. הרעה is used repeatedly in Jeremiah as a general word describing trouble and disaster. And in this description it comes "upon all the inhabitants of the land."

In its simplest form the symbolic experience of the boiling cauldron is meant to indicate that the source of the disaster which will come upon all the land will be from the north. Whether the pot is meant to symbolize Judah which is being heated by a fire blown from the north[115] or whether the cauldron itself refers to the northern enemies emptying their boiling contents toward the south[116] is not clear. The only important detail for Jeremiah is the announcement that God's judgment is being readied for release and that the human instrument of that judgment will come from the north. The general prophetic mission of bearing God's words "to uproot, to tear down, to exterminate, to destroy, to build, and to plant" now begins to take on specific detail and a specific historical context.

Verses 15 and 16 belong with the symbolic experience of the boiling pot in that they provide a poetic judgment oracle which continues to clarify this major theme of a specific message which the prophet is called to proclaim. Hyatt says that "these verses are the addition of the

Deuteronomic editor" since the original explanation of the boiling pot must have been succinct as in the case of the previous "vision."[117] He connects them with Jer. xxvi 13a, which he indicates are from the hand of the same editor. I do not deny the complex redactional history which may be present here, but the poetic formulation of these verses and the very smooth movement from verse 14 to verse 15 are evidence against an obvious identification of these verses with a Deuteronomistic editor.

These verses are set apart by the inclusion of the formula נְאֻם-יְהוָה at the end of the first line of verse 15. As in verses 8 and 19, it authoritatively punctuates the material as divine pronouncement. But, whereas the context of verses 8 and 19 is God's firm promise of personal deliverance for the prophet, here the context is God's resolute plan concerning the judgment of his people. The formula has the effect of identifying these summary verses with the many other more expanded judgment oracles delivered by the prophet which also include this formula.

Line 15a ties in with the verses which precede it by further repetition of the catchword צָפוֹנָה. But rather than an abstract "evil" (הָרָעָה) "from the north" as in verse 14, here the evil begins to take on a more personal identity as a human principality. Rather than being "released," the instrumentality of God's judgment is portrayed as being "called" (כִּי הִנְנִי קֹרֵא לְכָל-מִשְׁפְּחוֹת מַמְלְכוֹת צָפוֹנָה). קרא (Q) is a common verb in Jeremiah (51 times)

and it is used in a variety of ways.[118] Here it is used in the sense of "to summon" or "to send for" as in Jer. ix 16: "Consider and call for (. . וְקִרְאוּ לָ --parallel with שׁלח) the mourning women, that they may come" (cf. also xlii 8).[119]

Those to whom God's summons goes forth are described in the MT as כָּל-מִשְׁפְּחוֹת מַמְלְכוֹת צָפוֹנָה ("all the peoples from the kingdoms of the north"). This phrase is translated quite literally in the Latin, Aramaic, and Syriac, but the LXX omits מִשְׁפְּחוֹת and adds a modifying phrase, thus rendering the phrase πασὰς τὰς βασιλείας ἀπὸ βορρᾶ τῆς γῆς ("all the kings of the land from the north"). Because the poetic line seems too long in the MT and the phrase is awkward, it is a great temptation to delete מִשְׁפְּחוֹת on the basis of the LXX.[120] But if the LXX reflects an earlier Hebrew Vorlage here, it is difficult to account for τῆς γῆς , a phrase which is not considered by those who look to the LXX for clarification.[121] Since the line is grammatically correct and the evidence of the ancient versions is inconclusive, it is my judgment that the phrase should be retained as in the MT, despite the interruption of poetic rhythm. It remains to discover how the phrase should be interpreted.

מִשְׁפָּחוֹת occurs seven times in this plural form in Jeremiah. In three of these instances it refers to "tribes" or "clans" of either Judah or Israel (ii 4; xxxi 1; xxxiii 24 cf. viii 3). In two of the other three appearances (not including i 15), it seems to refer to large, national

bodies. In x 25, it is poetically parallel with הַגּוֹיִם ("the nations") and refers to those peoples who have "devoured Jacob." The context is a proleptic vision of destruction in which there is a report of "a great clamor out of the land of the north" which comes "to make the cities of Judah a devastation/desolation." These "nations," referred to in x 22, 25, are certainly meant to have the same identity as those in i 15, so we may assume that הַגּוֹיִם would also be an appropriate synonym in i 15. In Jer. xxv 9, a verse which in many respect parallels i 15, God declares: הִנְנִי שֹׁלֵחַ וְלָקַחְתִּי אֶת-כָּל-מִשְׁפְּחוֹת צָפוֹן נְאֻם-יהוה ("'Behold I am sending for and I will take all the nations/ families of the north,' declares the Lord."). Again, large, national groups seem to be in view rather than smaller, family or clan units. Thus, מִשְׁפָּחוֹת in Jeremiah i 15 is also likely to refer to large units, hence, the translation "peoples."

מַמְלְכוֹת is found twelve times in Jeremiah and in each case refers to political units ruled by kings.[122] The combination of the two words in this construct relationship does not appear elsewhere and, therefore, it is possible that they should be considered doublets. But the meanings of the words is enough different that they do make some sense together when translated "the peoples of the kingdoms of the north." The reference would be to some sort of coalition, and, indeed, such a coalition is mentioned elsewhere in Jeremiah. In xxv 17-29, all the kings and

peoples of the earth are commanded to drink from the cup of God's wrath. In verse 26 this includes "all the kings of the north, near and far, one with another" . . . "and all the kingdoms of the earth," a description which indicates a grouping of peoples and kingdoms of the north. Even more relevant to the whole context of i 15, 16, is xxxiv 1 which describes Nebuchadnezzar's battle against Jerusalem. Not only was Nebuchadnezzar and all of his army present, but also, "all the kingdoms of the earth that were under his dominion and all the peoples. . ." (וְכָל-מַמְלְכוֹת אֶרֶץ מֶמְשַׁלְתּוֹ יָדוֹ וְכָל-הָעַמִּים). Even though Jer. i leaves the identity of the "people" quite ambiguous, it seems likely that the referent is to those who were a part of the Babylonian Empire (cf. Jer. xxxiv 1; xxv 9).[123]

The next two lines of verse 15 describe the coming of these groups from the north to take their places in battle against Jerusalem and Judah. The language and images employed are somewhat unusual but their intent is to convey the destructive superiority of God's instruments of judgment.

In line 2 of verse 15, the oracle states that "they will come" (וּבָאוּ) confirming the authority of God's call. Furthermore "each will place his throne at the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem" (וְנָתְנוּ אִישׁ כִּסְאוֹ פֶּתַח שַׁעֲרֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם). To this point no kings have been mentioned, unless one reads מַמְלְכוֹת as "kings."[124] Yet כִּסֵּא in Jeremiah always refers to a royal throne (17 times), so it must be assumed that

these are various kings rather than Babylonian officers and court functionaries as Kimchi states. We must assume that the use of the term מַמְלָכוֹת in line 1 implies the presence of kings who were to come a a part of the conquering coalition. The "placing" of a throne apparently implied a position of authority (cf. Jer. lii 32) and conquest (cf. xliii 10; xlix 39 -- both with שׂוּם), although this seems to be an idiom peculiar to Jeremiah.[125] It is significant that the thrones were placed "at the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem" which was a traditional location for judgments to be rendered (II Sam. xv 2; Amos v 10, 12, 15), business to be transacted (Ruth iv 1), and people to gather (jer. xvii 19, 20; Ps. lxix 12). In II Sam. xix 9, the gate was the place where the king sat to give encouragement and to receive fealty from his people. I Kings xxii 10 records that during the negotiation of an alliance between Jehoshaphat and Ahab, their thrones were set up פֶּתַח שַׁעַר שֹׁמְרוֹן ("at the entrance of the gate of Samaria"). Thus the sense of the line is that Jerusalem will no longer be under the authority of her own king, but at every gate (note plural שַׁעֲרֵי) there would be kings of a conquering coalition claiming the homage of the people. It is little wonder that preservation for Jerusalem is described in terms of kings and princes coming "through the gates of this city" to sit on the throne of David (Jer. xvii 25).

Just as the second line of verse 15 is somewhat awkward, since it lacks a proper referent for the pronoun

"his," so the third line is awkward since it shifts the subject back to the corporate sense of the coalition army as in line one. The line reads וְעַל כָּל-חוֹמֹתֶיהָ סָבִיב וְעַל כָּל-עָרֵי יְהוּדָה . The meaning of these two parallel prepositional phrases is clear. עַל is used frequently in the context of seiges "against" a city, particularly in relation to the "walls." In Jer. lii 7, the army of the Chaldeans are said to be עַל-הָעִיר סָבִיב ("surrounding the city") during a seige of Jerusalem. Further on in the same passage, "all the walls around Jerusalem" (כָּל-חוֹמוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם סָבִיב --vs. 14) are broken down.[126] Repeatedly, various instruments of God's wrath come "against" (עַל) Jerusalem "on every side" (סָבִיב).[127] That this was a general idiom relating to the seige of a city can be seen in its application to the destruction of Babylon in l 14, 15, 29 where the battle lines are drawn, the battle cry is raised, and many are summoned to encamp "against" Babylon "on every side." So this final line refers to the seiges which will be wrought against Jerusalem and all of Judah by the coalition from the north.

The last two lines of verse 15 would have read far more clearly had the subjects of the lines been more carefully indicated. Nevertheless, the entire verse still provides a vivid summary of the way in which God's wrath against Judah will be manifest. It is a message which Jeremiah will be asked to announce again and again in a variety of ways as a solemn warning.

In verse 16, the focus of the message turns from the instrumentality of God's judgment to the causes which have motivated it. It may be argued that verse 16 should actually precede verse 15, since judgment precedes execution. But the order here is determined by wider literary considerations which have woven the entire section (vss. 13-16) together around the catchword צָפוֹן in verses 13, 14, and 15.

The first colon of verse 16 draws attention to the fact that matters of justice will be pronounced: וְדִבַּרְתִּי מִשְׁפָּטַי אוֹתָם . The construction is unique to Jeremiah (cf. xii 1; lii 9; iv 12),[128] and should be translated: "And I will speak matters of justice with them" (cf. comments on xii 1), as in the Vulg., Targ., and Pesh., and against the LXX which indicates a translation "against them." The emphasis is on God's just claims. These are not arbitrary judgments, but pronouncements originating in God's righteous character. The antecedent of "them" must be the "cities of Judah" rather than the kings of the northern nations as the context supports.[129]

The second colon begins a series which enumerates these matters by which God is justly offended. The colon begins with a summary phrase עַל כָּל-רָעָתָם ("because of all their wickedness"). רעה is a favorite term for Jeremiah, occurring some 88 times in the book. It refers both to the wickedness of the people as in this case and to the calamity which God will bring as a result.[130] Often these two uses

are found linked as here where "disaster" (i 14) comes as a result of "wickedness" (i 16).[131]

What follows is now a series of three verbal phrases which outline the primary offenses of the people. The first verb, עֲזָבוּנִי ("they abandoned me"), at the end of the second colon of line one describes the basic offense while the other two phrases which follow in the second line of the verse describe a further offense which naturally follows the first. זבח (Q) appears 24 times in Jeremiah, 21 of which are in chapters i-xxv. In 14 instances (all in chapters i-xxii) it is employed specifically to describe those who have forsaken or abandoned God and their covenant relationship with him.[132] They have "broken the yoke" and "torn the bonds" (ii 20) even though God had "fed them to the full" (v 7). "They have abandoned the fountain of living water, even the Lord" (xvii 13 cf. ii 13). They have "forgotten" God (xviii 15), and made the land of promise into an "alien place" (xix 4). In four prose passages (v 19; ix 12; xvi 11; xxii 9) God declares that when the people ask "why has the Lord our God done all these things to us?", the answer will be "Because you have forsaken me. . ." All the specific examples of moral decay, ethical corruption, and cultic abuse which are a part of the prophet's pronouncements are seen as having their roots in this essential fault of the people. Thus it is appropriate that this charge should appear in Jer. i 16 as the first specific offense within the summary of that which the prophet will

proclaim.

The first "wickedness" of the people was to forsake God, but the second (as indicated in ii 13: כִּי-שְׁתַּיִם רָעוֹת עָשָׂה עַמִּי) was to try to replace him with a substitute. This is the sense of verse 16b. In over half of the passages in Jeremiah where the people are accused of abandoning God, they are also accused of various acts of obeisance to false Gods. (See appendix.) In v 7 "they swore by those who are not gods;" in v 19, xvi 11, xxii 9 "they served foreign gods;" in ix 13, xvi 11 "they walked . . . after the Baals;" and so on. The phrases utilized here in verse 16 are also common elsewhere. קטר (P) appears 17 times in Jeremiah, and in eight of these the entire phrase as we see it here appears with only minor variations.[133] קטר (P) in general means "to let go (sacrifice) up in smoke" and is usually thought of as indicating the burning of incense. Certainly this is how it is interpreted in the Targ. which reads: "and they offered up spices/perfumes" (וְאַסְיִקוּ בֻסְמִין) and in the Pesh. which reads "and they burned incenses/spices" (ܘܩܛܪܘ ܒܣܡܐ). LXX quite literally renders קטר (P) with ἐθυμίασαν ("they burned so as to produce smoke" or "they burned incense"), while the Vulg. employs a more general term libaverunt ("they have sacrificed"). Bright points out that קטר (P) is not only used of incense but also of burnt offerings of fat (I Sam. ii 16; Ps. lxvi 15) or meal (Amos iv 5).[134] The exact practice which Jeremiah has in view here is uncertain. Jer. xliv 21 employs a noun form קִטֵּר

in conjunction with the verb, and this probably means "incense" though it is a <u>hapax legomenon</u> and has therefore been disputed.[135] But whatever the particular practice, Jeremiah only uses this verb in relation to pagan worship (often taking place on the rooftops.[136] אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים ("other gods") appears seventeen times in Jeremiah and is employed generally in reference to gods with which the people have never had any prolonged contact. Jer. vii 9, for example, distinguishes אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים from בַּעַל [137] and adds the further description אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יְדַעְתֶּם ("which you have not known") to the designation.[138] Jer. vii 8 distinguishes the "other gods" from מְלֶכֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם ("the Queen of Heaven"--probably the Assyrian Babylonian goddess Ishtar who is called by this title or some Canaanite goddess with which Ishtar had been identified),[139] and xix 13 distinguishes them from כֹּל- צְבָא הַשָּׁמַיִם ("all the host of heaven"--see viii2 for further description of the practice). In Jer. xliv, אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים may refer to the various gods encountered by the people living in Egypt during the exile, although xliv 3 makes it clear that the people's service to these gods was not new but rather a practice which they were continuing from their past. The fact that these "other gods" were not ones which the people had ever known ("nor their forefathers nor the kings of Judah"--xix 4) makes their worship all the more despicable and ridiculous. They had abandoned Yahweh who had related to them, provided for them, and acted on their behalf again and again, only to go

after gods who were of no consequence and with whom they did not even have experience. שׁחה (Hithp.) in the last colon is employed only eight times in Jeremiah. In all but two instances it is applied to the worship of things other than Yahweh. In xxii 9; xxv 6; xvi 11; and xiii 10 it is used in relation to the אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים and in viii 2 it describes the people's response to "all the host of heaven." In each of these instances it is also connected with the verb עבד ("to serve") suggesting an active adoration. שׁחה (Hithp.) quite literally means "to bow oneself down" or "to prostrate oneself as in homage,"[140] and, in the case of Jer. i 16 it is לְמַעֲשֵׂי יְדֵיהֶם ("to the works of their hands").[141] This latter designation appears six times in Jeremiah (though only in xliv 8 and here is the plural "works" utilized). In xxv 6, 7, xxxii 30, and xliv 8 it is not certain whether the phrase simply refers to the people's activities which have provoked God to anger, or whether it refers to various idols which they have constructed. But in x 3, 9, the designation specifically relates to "the work of the hands of a craftsman" who makes idols. Jer. x 1-16 is in fact an extended oracle disclaiming the superstitious practices of the nations in relation to their idols which God's people had substituted for their worship of the "true God, the living God, and the everlasting King" (vs. 10). It is likely that this is the sense in which מַעֲשֵׂי יְדֵיהֶם should be regarded in i 16, both because of the use of the verb שׁחה and because of the strong parallelism with the first

colon of the line. Again the emphasis is on the severity of the people's sin, but the imagery of bowing down to something which they themselves created also suggests the foolishness of their action.

Thus, verse 16 provides a succinct, biting statement of God's complaint with his people. They have abandoned the God who has related to them throughout their history and have substituted gods either that they have never known or that they have created themselves. And it is for this cause--indeed for these abominations--that God is bringing judgment.

While verses 13-16 do not touch on all of the issues which would be a part of Jeremiah's proclamation, they certainly touch on two of the key themes, namely the people's apostasy and God's resultant judgment. At the conclusion of verse 16, Jeremiah has been equipped with all the necessities of his vocation. He has the nature and title of a prophet from birth, he has received the authority of his office by virtue of his possession of God's words, and he has been briefed as to the occasion of the exercise of his office.

It is in the judgment oracle that we see a marked departure from the prophetic orthodoxy of the late 7th century. If oracles against the nations can be viewed in the orthodox context as a word of shalom for Israel, here in Jeremiah's call, there is a reversal of this pattern. The primary message of Jeremiah would be that the kingdoms of

the north will be called as instruments of judgment against Jerusalem.

Jeremiah i 17-19

Verses 17-19 continue the theme of Jeremiah's commissioning. Provision has been made for his vocation and now he is sent forth. Although the verses do no fall into a perfect poetic meter, they nevertheless bear the rythmic mark and style of poetry. As to form, Berridge and others have pointed out that the pericope has the Gattung of a "structurally pure salvation oracle."[142] However, distinctively Jeremianic elements can also be noted, and the section is integrally related to the rest of the chapter both thematically and stylistically.[143]

Verse 17 opens with the statement וְאַתָּה תֶּאְזֹר מָתְנֶיךָ ("But, you will gird up your loins"), which immediately draws attention back from the message to the prophet himself. "Girding the loins" was a procedure typical of a man who was about to move into action (cf. I Kings xviii 46: וַיְשַׁנֵּס מָתְנָיו ; Exod. xii 11).[144] In two instances a similar phrase is used by a prophet in commissioning another to go and accomplish a prophetic task. In II Kings iv 29 (חֲגֹר מָתְנֶיךָ) Elijah sends Gehazzi to try to heal the Shunammite's son. In II Kings ix 1, the same phrase is used by Elisha when he sends one of the "sons of the prophets" to anoint Jehu. In addition to physical preparation for a task, the phrase also reflects an emotional preparation or a summoning

up of personal confidence. For example, God commands Job twice: "Gird up your loins like a man (אֱזָר-נָא כְגֶבֶר חֲלָצֶיךָ); I will ask you, and you instruct me!" (Job xxxviii 3; xl 7) He scornfully invites Job to stand and confront God with wisdom which is superior to God's.[145] In this sense, the phrase is somewhat equivalent to saying, "Muster your courage and be emotionally resolute!" It is interesting that in at least one striking passage other than Jer. i 17, this resolute quality stands opposite חתת (N). In Isa. viii 9, the proclamation rings out to the nations: "Gird youselves, yet be dismayed! Gird yourselves, yet be dismayed!" (הִתָּאַזְּרוּ וָחֹתּוּ) Thus Jeremiah is to prepare himself both physically and emotionally for the task which is ahead of him. Weiser, citing I Kings xx 11, indicates that Jeremiah's preparations are for warfare.[146] Reventlow goes even further in connecting the phrase with preparation for holy war since a salvation oracle was delivered to charismatic leaders before a holy war and since the terminology of battle is employed in verse 19.[147] Although the terminology enjoys a rich usage, those passages which contextually and lexigraphically are closest to Jer. i 17 do not support these latter conclusions, especially when they are connected with broad interpretations like that of Berridge: "His entire life and ministry are depicted here as being a holy war which he shall wage against his own people" symbolically representing "that holy war which Yahweh would wage . . ."[148]

Following the emphasis on self-preparation, Jeremiah again receives reassurance concerning his prophetic task. קום (Q) is often used in Jeremiah to indicate that action is expected forthwith.[149] In three other instances God commands the prophet to a specific action with the imperative form of the verb.[150] Here, however, the form of the verb is not imperative but the perfect with a waw-consecutive. There are two possibilities for how this may be read. First, it may be read not as a command but straightforwardly as a promise or future inevitability. "You will stand/arise," as in the case of the imperfect forms in i 7, is thus read as a phrase of reassurance that Jeremiah will indeed be able to fulfill the vocation for which God has created him and equipped him. וְקַמְתָּ read in this way also suggests a sense of resoluteness, determination or immutability. In Jer. xliv 28, 29, God speaks of his word "which will stand" against the people.[151] Understood in this light, וְקַמְתָּ prefigures verse 18 in which God establishes the prophet as a fortification against the land.

But if this is the way that the verb is to be read, it is somewhat puzzling that the LXX, Vulg., and Pesh., all of whom carefully and accurately translate the imperfects in i 7 as second person singulars with a future meaning, have here in i 17 read these first two lines as a series of imperatives. This brings us to the second possible way in which the verse can be read. It is quite possible that the verse could have a distinctly imperative sense with the

forms read as jussives. Indeed the perfect with a waw-consecutive is often used with an initial imperative to carry an imperative idea. The problem with this solution here is that וְנָתוֹן is not imperative in form, though it does seem to be used as one. Furthermore, reading the form as a jussive does not provide the full impact of an imperative.[152] If we do opt for an imperative sense despite these problems (and surely verse 17 carries an imperative "flavor" regardless of the grammatical formulation), the meaning of the verse is transformed from a statement of reassurance, to one of divine compulsion. This is Jeremiah's responsibility, not a God-promised inevitability. And verse 18 takes on a more conditional sense: if Jeremiah girds, stands, speaks, and does not lose his nerve then God will make him impervious.

Perhaps no final decision need be made as to whether these verb forms represent either statements of inevitability or commands. On the purely practical level, Jeremiah often felt the inevitability of his vocation. What at times seemed like a wonderful assurance that he would be able "to stand and to speak," at other times seemed like coercion on the part of God. Hence, Jeremiah would cry out: "You deceived me, and I was deceived! You are stronger than I, and you have prevailed." (Jer. xx 7) His choice was not so much whether or not he would speak, as it was choosing the kind of attitude with which he would approach his essential obedience. He could either speak having "girded"

himself against fear and dismay, or he could speak clothed in a veil of self-pity.

This brings us to the final line of verse 17, where Jeremiah is commanded not to fear. The phrase bears a distinct resemblance to verse 8a, but here it is the verb חתת which is used (in the n gative jussive formulation) rather than ירא . The parallelism between these two verbs is old and frequently appears throughout the OT,[153] although ירא and not חתת is used when standing alone in this type of formulation in every instance but here. Thus this becomes a rather interesting construction. The LXX renders this line μὴ φοβηθῇς απὸ προσώπου αὐτῶν μηδὲ πτοηθῇς ἐναντίον αὐτῶν ("do not be afraid of their face and do not tremble before them") which may presuppose a Vorlage אל תירא מפניהם ולא תחת לפניהם.[154] Janzen does not follow Ziegler in assuming that this Vorlage was the original, but rather suggests that it represents a secondary change "from an unusual expression to a closely-related, more common cliché."[155] Volz assumes that the LXX was trying either to clarify a difficult Hebrew reading or to gloss the line on theological grounds.[156] But in either case, there is no reason for us to depart from the MT.

אַל-תֵּחַת מִפְּנֵיהֶם corresponds closely with אַל-תִּירָא מִפְּנֵיהֶם in verse 8. חתת may be employed simply because of the possibility of word play (for which, as we have seen, there is precedent in chapt. i). On the other hand, it may also be used consciously as a companion parallel to ירא ,

as is often true where חחת appears, hence, becoming a unifying factor for the whole passage. Further, it may be chosen precisely to convey a distinctive meaning with more impact than the common formulaic expression. חחת (N), as is indicated above, is used as the opposite of "to gird oneself" in Isa. viii 9, which is evidence of its particular appropriateness here.[157] The general meaning of חתת is "to be shattered/broken" and the application to the human disposition seems to imply a shattering of confidence, stability or courage (hence, "to be dismayed").[158] In Jer. xvii 18, Jeremiah calls upon God to bring retribution on those who have persecuted him. Among other things he says יֵחַתּוּ הֵמָּה וְאַל-אֶחַתָּה אָנִי which, in light of the verbal parallel with בוש , quite likely means something like: "Let it be their courage that snaps--not mine!" as Bright suggests.[159] In Jer. x 2, Yahweh tells the people וּמֵאֹתוֹת הַשָּׁמַיִם אַל-תֵּחַתּוּ כִּי-יֵחַתּוּ הַגּוֹיִם מֵהֵמָּה׃. The "nations" here are pictured as cowering at the signs in the heavens. Their courage is shattered and they are terrified, but the Israelites are not to follow their pattern. Similarly, Jeremiah is instructed in i 17 not to break down or to lose his courage, but rather "to gird his loins" or fortify himself. Perhaps the idea expressed by Bright in his translation comes close to the mark: "Don't lose your nerve because of them."[160]

It is the final phrase which introduces an unexpected "twist" to the line. What we might expect is a word

promising God's solution when adversity arises as in i 8 or i 19b. But here the idea is quite different. The phrase reads פֶּן-אֲחַתֵּךְ לִפְנֵיהֶם . חתת appears again as the second element of the wordplay, though here it is in the Hiphil. The use of two conjugations of the same verb together is a distinctive element of Jeremiah's style.[161] חתת (H) is quite rare, occurring only five times in the OT, all of which demonstrate a causative meaning.[162] In Isa. ix 3, God causes the yoke of the people's burden to shatter. In Job xxxi 34, Job asserts that he has not allowed the "contempt of families" to intimidate him or terrify him (וְחִתַּנִי). They have not caused him to lose his nerve and so refrain from right action. The closest grammatical parallel to the phrase in Jer. i 17 is in Jer. xlix 37, where Yahweh declares: וְהַחְתַּתִּי אֶת-עֵילָם לִפְנֵי אֹיְבֵיהֶם . The context is God's declaration that he will bring calamity (רָעָה) upon Elam. LXX (xxv 37) renders this verse as καὶ πτοήσω αὐτοὺς ἐναντίον τῶν ἐχθρῶν αὐτῶν ("And I will put them in fear/cause them to tremble before their enemies"), indicating that it was a shattering of morale or courage (psychological warfare) which was understood, rather than physical destruction (as in the LXX rendering of חתת in xxxi 20 [Heb. Jer. xlviii 20]). The meaning of the final phrase of i 17, thus, must be something like: ". . . lest I will cause you to lose your nerve in their presence." The point that God is making is that Jeremiah must strengthen himself psychologically to speak. If he lets his courage be

daunted in the contemplation of those to whom he will be sent, he is likely to be disgraced when he actually faces them. If he cannot face his audience boldly as he privately anticipates the confrontation, the actual derision and persecution will break him and he will be subject to even further scorn.

Kimchi interprets similarly with the paraphrase: "If you are not afraid of them and you trust in me, I will deliver you from their hand, but if you fear them, I will shatter you and cause you to fall in their presence." But the meaning was apparently not so clear to the translators of the ancient versions. I have already noted the alterations which the LXX reflects. And the LXX also adds to the end of the verse an extra phrase: "For I am with you to deliver you." This is probably an insertion from i 8 or i 19, perhaps included here to further offset the potential theological ambiguity of the MT.[163] The Vulg. also attempts to clarify the theological inference of the line by rendering it as: "Do not be afraid at their presence, for I will indeed not make you to fear their countenance (stern look/grim visage)" (Ne formides a facie eorum; Nec enim timere te faciam vultum eorum). The Pesh. translates accurately, though not attempting to preserve the word play.[164] The Targ. renders the line with a characteristic circumlocution: "Do not shrink back (תְּתְמְנַע) from reproving them lest I shatter you before them." This supports the idea that the phrase relates to the possibility that

Jeremiah might lose his nerve.

In summary, verse 17 reflects on Jeremiah's responsibility as his vocation is about to commence. He will indeed stand and speak--God will provide the words and the opportunity--but he must prepare himself carefully for what is ahead. The inference is that the struggle will be intense, especially in the psychological realm. Whereas God can deliver him from all that will threaten his demise from without (cf. verse 18), God cannot protect the prophet from himself, that is, from the potential of his own psychological destruction. Here in the inner dimensions of his life, the prophet must gird himself. God can supply the promises and the reassurance, but only the prophet himself can accept these as truth and respond to them rather than to other personal, weaker voices. I do not believe that God's warning in this verse implies a fundamental weakness in the personality or character of the prophet. Jeremiah is not being portrayed here as timid, cowardly, or overly sensitive and, hence, overly subject to being overwhelmed by fear. Rather this verse portrays an extremely realistic view of the enormity and extreme difficulty of the task which is before Jeremiah. He has been placed in a position of terrible responsibility in which he will have to function with little human support and much opposition.

If verse 17 outlines the part that Jeremiah must exercise for himself as he moves into the inevitable

conflicts that his vocation will bring, then verses 18 and 19 outline the part that God will play in caring for the prophet. The personal pronouns which introduce verses 17 and 18 serve to emphasize this point. "But you . . . " says God to Jeremiah in verse 17, only to follow with "And I . . . " in verse 18.[165]

These introductory pronouns also serve to tie the verses together. There seems little doubt that i 18, 19 and xv 20 are related and may have influenced each other, but there is little evidence that i 18, 19 should be considered a direct borrowing or imitation of xv 20 in an expanded form, and hence, a literary unit in and of itself.[166] The differences between the two occurrences are more substantial than simple expansion would produce, and in each case the verses are thoroughly integrated into their separate contexts.[167] Were it not for the reflection of i 18, 19 in xv 20 it is unlikely tht these verses would ever have been evaluated as a separate literary unit in chapter i.

The first phrase of i 18, וְאֲנִי הִנֵּה נְתַתִּיךָ , has echoes in both verse 5c, where נתן is also employed, and verse 10a, which also carries the idea of an appointment being made. But unlike these previous verses in which Jeremiah is appointed to a specific office or task, here he is endowed with protection. Thus, נתן has the meaning "to constitute/to establish." The construction נתן with an accusative and ל is a fairly common one especially in Jeremiah.[168] Indeed, in each of the Jeremiah passages

cited, God is seen as making the nation as a "ruin," "an object of horror" or "a terror" for all the kingdoms of the earth. It is within God's hand both to tear down and to build (verse 10). The nation will face destruction, but Jeremiah as described in i 18 will find himself fortified.

As in verse 10, the time referent הַיּוֹם punctuates the idea that something distinctly new has been added to Jeremiah's life at the time of his call. The call narrative does not read like a series of insights which were slowly formulated within the prophet over a long period of time. Rather his awareness that his life had been uniquely marked by God and that he was being equipped by God to exercise his vocation came all at once.[169]

Three images now follow which describe the strength with which God will arm Jeremiah against all external attack. He will be constituted, first of all, as a לְעִיר מִבְצָר ("as a fortified city"). This phrase is well-known in BH as the designation of those cities which are walled and defensible against enemy attack.[170] In Jeremiah the phrase is likewise used of fortified cities, which are supposedly impervious to attack.[171] But repeatedly Jeremiah proclaims that even these cities in which the people trust (v 17) will be demolished or the people destroyed despite their apparent protection (viii 14). Nevertheless, the "fortified cities" are still presented as formidable, and it is this characteristic which is in view in i 18. Like the "fortified cities" Jeremiah will be capable of withstanding

his enemies.[172] The Targ. emphasizes the characteristic of strength by expanding the designation with "strong as a fortified city" (תַּקִּיף כְּקִרְיָה כְּרִיכָא). And Kimchi paraphrases God's promise as: "'They will not conquer you' (MT i 19) just as a man is not able to subjugate a fortified city, especially if it had 'walls of bronze.'" Kimchi connects the first and third image as if they belong together.

וְלְחֹמוֹת נְחֹשֶׁת stands as a plural ("walls") in the MT, but the ancient versions all read "wall" as a singular, as does xv 20. Since "city" and "pillar" are both singular, both the contextual evidence and the witness of the versions indicate that a simple transposition has taken place in the MT and that the text should read וְלְחוֹמַת נְחֹשֶׁת ("and a wall of bronze").[173]

Even in the singular it is not clear whether the picture is of a single length of highly fortified and impenetrable bronze wall or a surrounding wall as might be found around a city.[174] Of course no city is recorded as having had a bronze wall and, in fact, the image of a "bronze wall" does not appear in the OT except here and in xv 20. Thus, unlike the "fortified city" this is not a familiar designation, but rather one which has been constructed for a special purpose here. Bronze is attributed with a variety of characteristics in the OT, including a unique color, high value, heavy weight, and great comparative strength. It is quite likely that in

relation to the image of a wall, that it is this density and strength which is in view. Jer. xv 12 asks the rhetorical question: "Can anyone smash iron; iron from the north or bronze?" (הֲיֵרָעַ בַּרְזֶל בַּרְזֶל מִצָּפוֹן וּנְחֹשֶׁת). The verse is full of textual problems, but even in the LXX, which reads quite differently, it is the strength of the bronze which comes through. Likewise in the LXX of i 18, an addition is made to the phrase which emphasizes the strength or fortifying value of the bronze: καὶ ὡς τεῖχος χαλκοῦν ὀχυρὸν ("and as a bronze wall, strong . . ."). In the first image, LXX renders "fortified city" as ὡς πόλιν ὀχυρὰν utilizing the same expression, and in xv 20 the MT לְחוֹמַת נְחֹשֶׁת בְּצוּרָה ("as a wall of impregnable bronze") is rendered ὡς τείχος ὀχυρὸν χαλκοῦν . Thus the LXX has interpreted the image as a picture of impenetrability. Following Kimchi's remarks, the sense here is that even if the fortified city could under unusual circumstances be overthrown, the bronze wall is completely impenetrable. The image is meant to designate the highest security imaginable.

Moving finally to the second of the three images, God declares that Jeremiah will be וְלַעֲמוּד בַּרְזֶל ("as an iron pillar"). This designation is completely omitted by LXX, though it appears in the other ancient versions. Francis North states that the omission from the LXX alone supports the view that the phrase was an insertion, but he further supports his claim with with a reference to H_{2k} (one of the Hebrew texts collated in Benjamin Kennicott, Vetus

Testamentum Hebraicum cum variis lectionibus, 1776-80) which also omits it.[175] Further he states:

> It does not make the passage less difficult to drop this symbol of strength from the list. There is no cause for scribal error evident in the text. . . . And the insertion of such a gloss could be explained readily because of the reference to "bronze walls," for "iron" and "bronze" are mentioned together thirty times elsewhere in the Old Testament, so the "bronze walls" could easily have suggested the insertion of an iron metaphor. 176

North's three-fold argument for deletion is unfortunately not as convincing as the author indicates. Following his own criteria for critical analysis, it must be pointed out firstly that the passage is somewhat less difficult when the phrase is dropped, simply because it is a highly unusual phrase, and because the first and third images have so much affinity for one another.[177] The sequence reads more smoothly without the second element. Secondly, there is some opportunity for scribal error (as even North admits) wherever there is a series of equivalent phrases, especially when the grammatical construction is similar (as with the repetition of וּלְ). And, thirdly, although a gloss could be explained here by the frequent occurrence of "bronze" and "iron" together elsewhere, it is also quite possible that it is exactly this commonly used relationship between two strong metals which was meant to form the basis of the original imagery of the verse. It is therefore my opinion that the MT should be retained. Kimchi's interpretation of this phrase is also correct: "And insofar as it says

'pillar of iron,' no one is able to knock him down or shatter him." Again the image is one indicating immutability and strength. Thus, all three phrases, drawing upon the strong imagery of fortification and structural solidity emphasize the extent to which the prophet will find himself invulnerable in times of external opposition. Jeremiah was not necessarily to be preserved from doing battle which would threaten to destroy his very foundations, but he was to be able to withstand.

עַל-כָּל-הָאָרֶץ ("against the whole land") expresses in general terms the extent of opposition for which God has prepared the prophet. The phrase corresponds to עַל-הַגּוֹיִם וְעַל-הַמַּמְלָכוֹת in verse 10, though this phrase describes the extent of the prophet's authority rather than the locus of his opposition. And whereas the description in verse 10 indicates a region beyond Jeremiah's own land, it seems clear that the description "against the whole land" refers only to Judah (as is evidenced by the following line) rather than to "the whole earth." In xv 20 the corresponding designation is simply לָעָם הַזֶּה ("to this people"). The Targ. interprets the phrase as "to give a cup of cursing for all the inhabitants to drink" (cf. Targ. i 5). It is likely that the Targ. is influenced by Jer. xxv 15 which employs a similar phrase (in the MT) in reference to the prophet's mission. Thus it became a formulaic expression in the Targ. But this verse does not describe Jeremiah's offensive role, but rather God's defensive provision for him, so the

pleonastic rendering seems out of place, unless the Targ. understands the prepositions לְ and ־ as an indication of Jeremiah's actions toward the people. In the LXX, the reference to the land is absent altogether, but this may be due to the recognition that the final line specifically interprets the general phrase (as Kimchi observes).

The final line of verse 18 presents a list which more particularly describes the sources of opposition which the prophet can expect. The preposition ־ is used to express the logical apposition to the previous phrase. Similar lists are used to interpret other general designations of the people in ii 26 and xxxii 32, and echoes of a stereotype list of officials appear frequently in the book.[178] The referent of מַלְכֵי יְהוּדָה ("kings of Judah") is straightforward. שָׂרֶיהָ ("her officials") is a bit more difficult.[179] The epithet appears 55 times in Jeremiah, designating a wide group best described as "statesmen."[180] The third group listed is the כֹּהֲנִים ("the priests"). They are omitted from the LXX list and many commentators consider the inclusion in the MT as an intrusion influenced by the stereotype lists elsewhere.[181] However, in this context which lists Jeremiah's opposition, certainly the priests are not out of place. In fact, one wonders why "the prophets," included elsewhere in similar lists, are not included here. If כֹּהֲנִים is an intrusion it seems likely that נְבִיאִים would also have intruded (as from ii 26). A possible explanation for the list as it presently stands in the MT,

is that the poetic meter of the line is best served by inclusion of only these elements. This also argues against the deletion of כֹּהֲנֶיהָ . Whereas the kings and statesmen represent the political sphere of opposition, the priests represent the cultic sphere.

Finally, עַם הָאָרֶץ ("people of the land") concludes the list as an inclusive designation of the rest of the populace. Bright reads the phrase as a technical term for the important landholders of Judah.[182] It is possible that עַם הָאָרֶץ does have the more specific meaning of "landed gentry" in Jer. xxxiv 19 and xxxvii 2, although even in these passages the reference could be to the general populace. In Jer. xliv 21; lii 6, 25, however, it is clear that the phrase is used generally, as even Bright, who is always tempted to interpret it technically, admits.[183] Because Jeremiah will have to stand "against all the land" (in the second line of i 18), it seems likely that the final phrase of the verse is meant to expand the scope of the list so that all the people of the land are included. Had another technical term been preferable it would likely have been נְבִיאֶיהָ as in ii 26. In Jer. xxxii 32, which has a very similar, though expanded, list in a prose context, the final elements are אִישׁ יְהוּדָה וְיֹשְׁבֵי יְרוּשָׁלִַם ("men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem") which could easily be abbreviated in a phrase like עַם הָאָרֶץ .

Jer. i 18, thus, is God's promise of undergirding in the face of opposition from government, cult, and general

populace. Although Jeremiah's call as a "prophet to the nations" had a much broader context, the opposition which he would face largely came from his own people. It was against them, the very people with whom he also felt the greatest solidarity, that Jeremiah would have to stand firmly.

Verse 19 continues to foreshadow Jeremiah's tension and suffering due to the opposition of his kinsmen.

The first line confirms that the concern of these final verses is the defense with which Jeremiah is provided rather than his offensive role. No mention is made of his mission, but only of what he can expect as he goes. And no statement could be clearer as regards the fact that opposition will come. The prophet should have no illusions about that.

Verse 19a is the only portion of these verses which is reproduced exactly in the corresponding line of xv 20. The meaning is explicit. וְנִלְחֲמוּ אֵלֶיךָ ("And they will fight against you") is a cryptic phrase indicating a significant battle. Jeremiah's opposition will not entail mere controversy or simple rejection, but will involve a battle, the goal of which is his destruction. לחם (N) is utilized elsewhere in Jeremiah to describe a literal warfare the aim of which is conquest and destruction.[184] Because of the strong military imagery, the Targ. renders the phrase with an extended paraphrase describing the conflict: "And they will contest and war to bring charges against you in order to suppress the words of your prophecy." Thus, the Targ.

sees the opposition as an attempt to suppress or silence the prophet, possibly through accusation or litigation.[185] It is not certain whether physical assault is also in view here, although Kimchi, commenting on לְחַצְּךָ at the end of the verse, says that this means that Jeremiah's enemies will not be able to kill him. Certainly, even a brief overview of Jeremiah's life during the years of greatest opposition demonstrates that there was indeed a great "war" against him.[186] לחם (N) is an appropriate description of the opposition and beautifully complements the imagery of fortification in verse 18.

But despite the rather ominous suggestion of the severity of opposition, the promise is made that וְלֹא-יוּכְלוּ לָךְ ("they will not overcome you"). יכל is generally found with a complementary infinitive, although occasionally in BH it occurs substantially alone.[187] In Jeremiah, there are a number of passages in which it is utilized as here. In Jer. v 22, the MT reads וַיִּתְגָּעֲשׁוּ וְלֹא יוּכָלוּ ("And they toss, yet they cannot prevail"). The text is likely corrupted since an adequate plural subject is not provided for this phrase.[188] Nevertheless the imagery is that God has set the bounds of the oceans (cf. Job xxxviii 8-11) and established the dry lands. He has this kind of authority in creation, and should certainly be acknowledged in his authority to set the bounds in human and national interaction. The most interesting uses of this construction in relation to i 19 and xv 20, however, are in chapter xx. In verse 7, Jeremiah

speaks to God: חֲזַקְתַּנִי וְתּוּכָל ("You have overpowered me and you are victorious"). God is stronger than the prophet and has triumphed within their relationship. In verse 9c, the prophet may actually be expressing the negative of his statement about God in verse 7, namely that God has him trapped. He cannot triumph over God nor can he gain victory over his predicament.[189] In verses 10 and 11, יכל is used in the context of Jeremiah's battle with his persecutors. Verse 10 quotes even those whom he assumes are friends as saying אוּלַי יְפֻתֶּה וְנוּכְלָה ("perhaps he will be seduced and we can overcome him"). But Jeremiah declares in verse 11 that, because Yahweh is fighting for him, "therefore my persecutors will stumble and they will not prevail." This statement of faith echoes God's promise in i 19 and xv 20, placing the justification for the declaration squarely upon God's might.

Verse 19, and the whole of the call narrative, concludes with the formulation כִּי-אִתְּךָ אֲנִי נְאֻם-יהוה לְהַצִּילֶךָ ("'For I am with you,' declares Yahweh, 'to keep you safe/deliver you'") which I have already examined in some detail in connection with its first appearance in the call narrative in verse 8. As in verse 8, the promise comes in relation to the disclosures that Jeremiah's prophetic vocation will not (indeed, cannot) be exercised without the experience of deep, personal cost and suffering. Nevertheless, on God's part, he will provide protection for the prophet from all ultimate harm. And further, Jeremiah

can rely upon God's presence throughout the conflict. Jeremiah is assured of his relationship with the living God--the God who elsewhere has the power to control all of nature and the movements of whole nations.

Summary

By the end of chapter i, the stage is set for the unfolding drama which will underlie Jeremiah's proclamation of the word of Yahweh. The prophet has been called and given both the authority and the equipment to enable him to carry out his vocation. In many respects his role is congruent with the expectations for a prophet. He will be the messenger of God's words. God will provide both the content of the message and the occasion to speak. The inadequacies which the prophet feels will be overridden by the provision of the Almighty.

We are assured in this first chapter, that Jeremiah's vocation is not of his own choosing. God was involved long before the prophet was even born in establishing the direction of his life. In this sense, Jeremiah is representative of Israel herself, whose life and purpose as a nation was ordained long before she was called into existence and her relationship with God was defined through the covenant.

But there are other elements in the call narrative which serve as portents of a more mysterious side of the prophetic vocation which will be revealed. Far from

experiencing the affirmation of the people whom he will serve, Jeremiah is warned that there will be extensive opposition. God's mark on his life will not be found in the acceptance of the message, nor in being honored among the "prophets," nor in a divine protection from assault, but rather in God's continual presence and ultimate deliverance. The "blessings" of the covenant, which would form the basis for the prophet's proclamation, would at times seem far off even for the prophet who obeyed. Here are the seeds of some of the theological quandry which Jeremiah would face as he watched the conflict between God's patience with his people and his own desire that justice be done so that he at least could experience that which had been guaranteed to the faithful.

The forms of the call narrative are traditional, but they have been utilized in a distinctive way and infused with content which is individual and personal to Jeremiah. The passage is included as an introduction to the entire book. It's purpose is not only to legitimize the message by illustrating the genuine nature of the call and the hesitancy on the part of the prophet, but also to indicate that we will witness a process of vocational redefinition, forged in the midst of suffering.

THE INTENTION OF SELF-DISCLOSURE IN JEREMIAH

The question of intentionality is inherently a difficult one for a number of reasons. First, it is an issue which can seldom be faced directly. Only in those instances when an author specifically indicates his intention can we have greater confidence in our pursuit (cf. Luke i 1-4; John xx 31; etc.), and these instances are rare. Second, there is always a cultural gap between a twentieth century reader and an ancient document which can never be fully bridged. It is a great, and often hidden temptation to read into the writings of the past our own philosophical, psychological, and social presuppositions. The quest for historical sensitivity and objectivity must be a constant goal in our hermeneutics. Third, there are often several layers of intention present in most of the ancient, biblical materials, resulting from the complex redactional history which evenutally gave rise to our canonical scriptures. The intentions of Jeremiah as he originally wrote the material and of his editors as they compiled it and shaped it may have been quite different. And fourth, intentionality can seldom be reduced to a single concern in any case, even when an author defines his task carefully. There are always many reasons why an author writes. Furthermore, as with any form

of art, the communication event consists not only in the author's intent, but in the effect which the work has on the reader or hearer. A work may or may not accomplish the author's intended purpose and still provide a significant influence on the reader's (or hearer's) perception of his own reality.

Even in the face of these difficulties, the pursuit of some definition of intentionality is a constructive and necessary task, inasmuch as it ultimately suggests an interpretive framework in which a piece of literature can be effectively understood. In the case of the self-disclosures in the Book of Jeremiah, it is only as we ask the question about the intent of these unique expressions, that the meaning of the entire, multi-faceted anthology begins to be more evident.

Although it is likely that the materials with which we have been dealing (especially the so-called "confessions") were not included in the original scroll or its second edition (cf. Jer. xxxvi), it is also likely that the material belongs to Jeremiah and reflects experiences which were personal to the prophet. From where else could they have come? The Deuteronomic redactor (Dtn.) seems to comment on the material and try to clarify its Sitz im Leben (cf. xi 21-23; xvi 1-9; i 11-16), but the attempts are too rough to indicate that the material originated with Dtn. Furthermore, the redactor is obviously concerned about the people's listening or not listening to the word (cf. Deut.

xviii 15, 18, 19), about false prophets who speak presumptuously (Deut. xviii 20-22), and about the role and efficacy of the prophet's intercession (Jer. xiv 7-11; xiv 19-22; xv 1; vii 16; xi 4), but if anything, Dtn. seems somewhat confused by the "confessions," needing to explain them so that they are not misconstrued.

As this present study has again demonstrated (following the work of Berridge and others who went before him),[1] the self-disclosures must not only be viewed as coming from the prophet, but also as expressing something of his own personal concerns and experiences. While traditional forms and motifs are utilized, the personal and unique manner in which Jeremiah expresses himself within these vehicles is a strong indication that they should not be viewed as cultic liturgies or corporate expressions without a personal referent.[2] Rather, we can have confidence that some type of authentic self-disclosure is available to us. Furthermore, a careful, critical analysis does not indicate that the expressions have been so thoroughly reworked by the redactors as to obscure forever the true nature of authentic Jeremianic self-expression.[3] Thus, there is something of both the personal reflections of the prophet and his original intent which are available to us. The issue is both to determine the meaning of Jeremiah's communication and to seek within the contextual, historical, and theological matrix the clues which help us to approach the question of intentionality more effectively.

Possible Intentions of the Jeremianic Self-Disclosures

In addition to supporting the assumption that the self-disclosures represent the historical Jeremiah, a careful study of these materials also reveals that the prophet must have had some purpose in mind for the public display of his struggles. This conclusion is indicated by a number of factors. First, the self-expressions are integrated in the text of the book in such a way that it is unlikely that their placement was altogether the work of a later redactor. This is true of both the "confessions" in particular and the self-disclosures in general. There is evidence that a later editor(s) attempted to supply an occasional explanation for this material (cf. the juxtaposition of xi 18-23 with xii 1-6), but it is not arranged in any way which would indicate that it was a part of a "private journal" which was later integrated into the final book.

Second, the fact that the materials which I have identified as "self-disclosures" appear both as integrated within oracular material as well as standing alone suggests that the prophet did not see any significant conflict between this type of material and prophetic proclamation.

Third, the style of the self-disclosures and the care with which they have been written is consistent with the rest of the Jeremianic corpus. This is polished, well-developed work, and not what might be expected from mere self-reminiscence.

Fourth, as Berridge rightly observes, the content of the confessions, and especially the answers received from Yahweh, seem to be consciously designed as applicable both to the prophet and to the people.[4] Jeremiah's experience becomes paradigmatic of what the people should expect from God. It is this characteristic which has contributed to the discussion as to whether this material should be viewed entirely as corporate expression.[5]

Fifth, the content of the self-disclosures, as we have repeatedly observed, is connected directly with the social function of the prophet. The subject of this material is consistently the struggle which the prophet faces within his vocation--the exercise of which has no meaning except in a social setting. These are not laments concerning the private affairs of an isolated individual, but the reflections of a prophet on his experience within the public arena. Because Jeremiah in his vocation is a public figure, his confessions by their nature have a public signficance.[6] This is certainly true from the standpoint of his redactors, and it must also be true from his own perspective as well, since, as I have already observed, it seems unlikely that the inclusion of this material can be attributed only to later editors.

Sixth, the "call narrative," which virtually no one questions as a public expression due to its appropriate, introductory function within the book and its correlation with other passages within the biblical corpus, is closely

linked with the rest of the self-disclosures in both style (language and form) and content (theme and theological concern). Not only does the call narrative introduce the interaction with the "word of Yahweh," which became the essential ingredient in Jeremiah's understanding of his vocation and the explicit or implicit issue behind each of the self-disclosures, but it also has obvious connections with other passages within the "confessions" (cf. xv 18-21; xx 8-10, 14-18; etc.). While the hand of later editors is quite evident in Jer. i, the central core of this material, which includes an introduction of the subjects addressed in the self-disclosures, undoubtedly comes directly from the prophet, including its apparent intent.

In summary, even if it is assumed that Jeremiah did not have an original public intent in the writing of the self-disclosures, it seems likely that he himself realized their value within the public domain and intended that they be included within his work. Whether they were a part of his public preaching or were reserved for inclusion with the written recension remains an open question.

Assuming, as I do, that the self-disclosures had a public rather than private aim, there are still several possibilities as to what Jeremiah's public intention might have been. It is obvious from even a cursory journey through the history of exegesis that the impact of this work has been extensive far beyond what Jeremiah could ever have personally designed. His experience would eventually become

the precursor of both exemplary and representative, atoning suffering.[7] His prayers would become a model for honest and personal dialogue with God.[8] And his example would become a source of encouragement and hope for God's suffering people throughout the ages. But these results could not have been within the prophet's consideration. There are a number of options, however, that have been proposed.

The first is simply that the self-disclosures were intended to be expressions of the deep emotions of Jeremiah's heart, similar to the laments of the Psalms. Certainly the forms are similar. Many commentators have seen the "confessions" primarily as a resourcebook for examining Jeremiah's psychological characteristics.[9] It is certainly true that some characterization of the prophet can be made from this material, but the case here is easily over-drawn. Jeremiah and the ancients were not concerned with revealing or analyzing the psychological aspects of the individual. There is no particular reason why Jeremiah should want to reveal his soul or pyschological disposition as an end in itself. This would only be interpreted as a form of self-pity. Personal lament had never been a part of the literary communication of the classical prophets.

The second possibility, is that the self-disclosures were intended to be expressions of rebellion and tension in Jeremiah's relationship with God and the assertion of his individuality. These were revealed as an indication of the movement away from institutional religion toward personal

religion, a direction which the prophet perceived as necessary because of the failure of the "old" ways to enable a sincere covenant obedience. By providing a "witness" to the dynamics of his own relationship with God, the prophet was suggesting that each individual could likewise interact with God directly. This is the view propounded by those whose primary focus in interpreting the confessions is on the personal tension which they reflect.[10] Chambers says, "The Confessions are the locus classicus of a man caught between doubt and faith, certainty and uncertainty. Confident of his call, he is yet uncertain as to whether God is leading him in the right direction."[11] Berridge says that it is through the "confessions" that Jeremiah publicly drew attention to the bond which united him with the people. He also had sinned and was reprimanded. But because he had been forgiven, he could bear testimony to the power of God's grace (cf. xv 15-21).[12] This is certainly one effect which these expressions have had on people over the years, but it is doubtful that this was the prophet's intent. Before a person is open to pursuing a different direction in his practice of faith, he must have experienced a clear failure of the old. In the case of the people of Jeremiah's day, they were still content with the appearance of "shalom" which their institutional forms were providing. Certainly they would not have been induced toward change by the outwardly insecure ravings of one whose faith could not offer the definition which they felt they had. This aim

would have been more likely to be effective during the exile, but the position of these self-disclosures within the oracular material of the first 20 chapters suggests an earlier date.

A third understanding is that the prophet was expressing his ambiguity concerning his relationship with God and theological understanding to the end that the people might also move away from their own fallacious precepts. This implies that Jeremiah had a defective understanding and had to mature from an old theological view to a new one. Certainly he must have gone through a maturing process, but why include it in the book, especially when the cult was convinced of its own royal and temple theology and did not share the prophet's ambiguity? And if this was the reason for the material, why should it not be better arranged? For example, Jer. xx 14-18 represents one of the most desparate expressions at precisely the point that we might expect to find a clear statement of growth. Is the intent to be viewed as similar to Job questioning God? Even in Job, the defect is not in him, but in his friends.

Wimmer holds that the confessions should be interpreted as a public propoganda technique--a sort of debating style utilizing the covenant lawsuit structure, the lament form, and his own suffering to establish a "charisma" or quality of his individual personality which would have a heightened impact on the people.[13] This was added to the "word of God" which was the "charisma proper" or central element of social

identity for the prophet. As with the other views, there is an element of truth here. But unlike the experience of Hosea, whose marriage to Gomer became an illustration of God's relationship with his people and, thus, a useful didactic tool, Jeremiah's suffering was not always so easily elucidated. One wonders just what positive effect Jeremiah's complaints would have had on his audience that might have added authority to his message beyond confirming that he was indeed a prophet isolated from the rest who claimed that office.

A fifth possible intention, similar to this last suggestion, is that the "confessions" were meant to document the prophet's truth claim. Wolff indicates that in the opposition and confusion between conflicting prophetic messages, the prophets needed to press hard to establish their claims.

> The hearers, however, can distinguish true and false messages only in the confrontation of the two, in which they can test the dependency relationships: Is the witness free in respect to his hearers; Does his own desire rule or is he governed by the free will of his God? The truth documents itself especially in suffering, as Jeremiah confesses: . . .(cf. xxiii 9). 14

The authentication of his message was undoubtedly of paramount concern for Jeremiah. But this could not come from the fact of his suffering alone. Since his suffering at times was a result of direct struggle in his relationship with God and not just caused by the persecution of his people or his stress at delivering oracles of doom, his

confession of suffering might just as well have indicated that he was indeed in error, which would explain why God seemed to ignore his pleading.

It has been my thesis that the primary intention of the self-disclosures was to reveal the nature of the true prophetic vocation in contrast with the prophetic orthodoxy of the late 7th century. Authentication would result as one of the very important by-products of establishing a new view of the prophetic office. Jeremiah's purpose was thus to publicly describe the process by which he came to understand how a prophet functions in his vocation which consisted of the internalization of the word of God and its subsequent articulation to the people.

As we have seen, the "word of God" was a key concept of Jeremiah's prophetic affirmation from his "call" onwards. The word which he experienced most frequently was "indignation and judgment," rather than the "shalom" of orthodox prophetism as practiced in the late 7th century. The "shalom" prophets may well have thought that their word was legitimate. Certainly the people did (cf. Jer. xviii 18; xxiii 16ff.; etc.). And they had a precedent for their thinking within their history and theology. Isaiah had prophesied that the monarchy and Temple would be sustained. The preservation of Jerusalem in 702 B.C. against Sennacherib enhanced and affirmed this theological position. So Isaiah's word became the prophetic precedent for a "shalom" theology, and this became the orthodoxy of

Jeremiah's time. Historically the living word of God to a past generation often becomes the intransigent word of orthodoxy in the present, and the situation in Jeremiah's day is a good example.[15] In the self-disclosures, Jeremiah wrestled with the word which he was called to proclaim. He was all too aware that his prophesies stood as lonely sentinels of doom in a sea of optimism. He longed to share that hope, and his self-disclosures portray the pain of the visions of devastation, the suffering of his lonely position, the anger at watching the people consistently led astray while he became the focus of their taunts, and the agony of not being able to change his decree or still his voice. His brokenness, caused by the word of Yahweh which went unheeded, mirrored the brokenness of his people, caused by their own obduracy.

In addition to revealing his struggle with a new message, the self-disclosures also portray his wrestling with orthodox theology. The very basis of all of prophetism was the belief that God works in history and that God is always right. Furthermore, God sees to the well-being of the righteous and brings punishment to the wicked. These were commonly held views, and Jeremiah continually reminded God of his divine attributes and responsibilities. He felt the awe of the Deity, but he was also confused by God's actions. In the confessions he publicly questioned God's credibility, asserting that God was lax in apportioning the rewards of life. He understood that no tradition could be

absolved from question if it contradicted experience.[16] In his own struggle toward a deeper understanding, he communicated that it was his experience (and that of the people) which required reinterpretation. The ease which the people were experiencing should no more be seen as an indication of God's pleasure, than the suffering which he incurred should be interpreted as God's abandonment.

The role of the prophet as it was portrayed within the orthodox practice was also called into question within the self-disclosures. The intercessory function, for example, was not necessarily assured, and certainly should not be regarded as programmatically efficacious. Neither could the receipt and transmission of God's word be programmed as the "shalom" prophets had become accustomed to doing because of the expectations of the people. They sought the "word" wherever it had been traditionally found (dreams, visions, divination), and even "borrowed" it from one another. But Jeremiah demonstrated that when the true word "happened" to him, it was unavoidable. "To stand in the council/counsel of Yahweh" meant a different kind of relationship with the Almighty than orthodox prophetism had come to practice.

Within the self-disclosures, the man and the prophet are never separated. It is the prophetic vocation which can be seen in tension, even as Jeremiah expresses his personal suffering. The disclosures are included in Jeremiah's writings as a chronicle of the failure of the old prophetic orthodoxy and the emergence a new, legitimate pattern.

The Effects of the Self-Disclosure

If we view the self-disclosures of Jeremiah as expressions of the nature of the prophetic vocation, as Jeremiah experienced it, in contrast to the prophetic orthodoxy of his day, then this material can be viewed as having certain effects.

First, the self-disclosures reveal the characteristics of the true prophetic vocation. This is communicated not only with regard to the message, the theology, and the office connected with Israelite prophetism (as suggested above), but also with regard to the role of suffering in the life of the prophet. Tradition had become established in Jeremiah's day around a concept of "prophet" as a prestigious and honored individual. Even the earlier classical prophets had come to be held in honor, and their lives were in many respects romanticized. Jeremiah documents a more correct view of the prophetic vocation in which suffering played a major role. Although the exact nature of Jeremiah's encounter with God remains mysterious, the dialogue form in which it is often expressed suggests a didactic intent. Jeremiah wanted to reveal the process by which he came to terms with his situation.

In the end, Jeremiah's suffering dispels the notion that a person's godliness is authenticated by the ease and security of his life. Obedience to God's call opened the way to a dynamic relationship with God rather than to a life

of comfort or freedom from pain. Right up to their final demise, the people continued to believe that their comfort was a sign of divine approbation of their lifestyle.

Similarly, Jeremiah dispels the notion that the verity of prophetic proclamation is authenticated by outward or external privilege. One cannot distinguish the true from the false prophet by examination of the apparent "blessings" which he enjoys.

Furthermore, personal suffering in the world cannot be avoided by obedience; in fact, it may be amplified by obedience. To fight against the sin which causes suffering means to encounter it, and, therefore, to suffer. Hence, suffering is not merely the unfortunate, and perhaps avoidable, consequence of delivering God's message, but it becomes the mark of a lifestyle of battling against sin on God's behalf. Suffering is necessary for the restoration of "shalom."

A second effect of the self-disclosures is the illustration of the fulfillment of the prophetic call. The call narrative suggests two aspects of the prophetic commission in Jer. i 17: 1) speak all that God commands; and 2) do not be dismayed. The first is tied to prophetic orthodoxy in that it was assumed that the prophet would speak God's word. But the latter point, which is expanded in the promise of God's provision in Jer. i 18, 19, is tied to a new view of the prophetic vocation. The "confessions" are Jeremiah's public record of the fulfillment of the whole

vocational description as revealed in his call. The prophet is called to a position of tension and suffering, which cannot be alleviated due to the nature of his office in relation to both God and the people.

Third, the self-disclosures are a witness to the sincerity of Jeremiah's sense of call. If Jeremiah was not entirely convinced of his call and the "fire burning in his bones," why should he suffer? What has he got to gain by proclamation of oracles of doom? He not only had nothing to gain, but he had lost a great deal and had suffered inordinately, unlike the false prophets. Jeremiah was convinced that his vocation was not the result of his own volition. He was no masochist, nor did his personality include an inherently rugged self-sufficiency or non-conformist bent (cf. x 23).

Fourth, the "confessions" model the dynamic nature of a relationship with God under the most difficult conditions. Jeremiah spoke against the mechanical understanding of religion as practiced by the people and by prophetic orthodoxy. His experience demonstrated an on-going, dynamic, personal encounter with the Living God, even during times of unrelieved suffering. While there is no indication that he saw his innocent suffering as vicarious, he may have seen these expressions as witness (cf. Jer. xlv). Jeremiah developed the theology of the covenant in his own fashion, ". . . the tension between God and man producing a completely personal relationship with God, a mutual fellow-

ship with God that finds its expression above all in prayer, a profound resignation of the whole man to God, a resignation refined and purified through crisis . . ."[17] The dialogues reflect a continual tension in vocation, not problems to be solved or a process to be outgrown.

Fifth, the self-disclosures have the effect of expanding the definition of prophetic vocation. Albright says:

> The Prophet was a man who felt himself called by God for a special mission, in which his will was subordinate to the will of God, which was communicated to him by direct inspiration. The prophet was thus a charismatic spiritual leader, directly commissioned by Yahweh to warn people of the perils of sin and to preach reform and revival of true religion and morality. 18

Rowley goes further in the personal dimension:

> The prophet who is properly so called was a man who knew God in the immediacy of experience, who felt an inescapable constraint to utter what he was profoundly convinced was the word of God, and whose word was at bottom a revelation of the nature of God no less than His will, who saw the life of men in the light of his vision of God, and who saw the inevitable issue of that life, who therefore declared that issue and pleaded with men to avoid it by the cleansing and renewing of their lives. 19

These definitions indicate who the prophet is in relation to God and in relation to a message. But Jeremiah's self-disclosures indicate that suffering must also be included in the understanding of prophetic vocation. This is what distinguishes the true prophet from the dead shell of prophetic orthodoxy. Jeremiah reveals himself as encountering the sin in the world which brings suffering to

humankind. He suffers as a member of sinful humanity and a broken nation; he suffers in his encounter with the resistance to his message; he suffers in sympathetic relationship to Yahweh, mirroring the suffering pathos of God for his people; he suffers as he tries to bear some of the intercessory responsibility on behalf of the people. In the end, he discovered his true vocation through his suffering.

APPENDICES

DISTRIBUTION OF THE VERBAL ROOTS OF JER. i 10 ELSEWHERE IN JEREMIAH

נתש	1.10	18.7	24.6	31.28	42.10	45.4	—	—	—	—	12.17	31.40N
נתץ	1.10	18.7	—	31.28	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
אבד	1.10	18.7	—	31.28	—	—	—	—	—	—	12.17P	
הרס	1.10	—	24.6	31.28	42.10	45.4	—	—	—	—	—	31.40N
בנה	1.10	18.9	24.6	31.28	42.10	45.4	29.5	29.28	31.4	35.7	12.16N	
נטע	1.10	18.9	24.6	31.28	42.10	45.4	29.5	29.28	31.5	35.7		
[רעע]	—	—	—	31.28	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	

OTHER APPEARANCES IN JEREMIAH OF THESE VERBAL ROOTS

נתש 12.14,15; 18.14N

נתץ 33.4; 39.8; 52.14; 4.26N

אבד P: 15.7; 23.1; 51.55; H: 25.10; 46.8; 49.38

הרס 50.15N

בנה 19.5; 22.13, 14; 32.31; 33.7; 32.35; 35.9; 52.4

נטע 2.21; 11.17; 12.2; 32.41

[רעע] +9 times

H = Hiphil
N = Niphal
P = Piel

APPENDIX B

PASSAGES WHERE "FORSAKING YAHWEH" IS ALSO RELATED TO TRYING TO REPLACE HIM IN JEREMIAH		
v 7	וַיִּשָּׁבְעוּ בְּלֹא אֱלֹהִים	"And they swore by those who are not gods"
v 19	וַיַּעַבְדוּ אֱלֹהֵי נֵכָר	"And they served foreign gods"
ix 13	וַיֵּלְכוּ אַחֲרֵי שְׁרִרוּת לִבָּם וְאַחֲרֵי הַבְּעָלִים	"And they have walked after the subborness of their heart and after the Baals."
xvi 11	וַיֵּלְכוּ אַחֲרֵי אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים וַיַּעַבְדוּם וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲווּ לָהֶם	"And they have walked after other gods and served them, and bowed down to them."
xviii 15	לַשָּׁוְא יְקַטֵּרוּ	"To worthlessness they burn incense"
xix 4	וַיְקַטְּרוּ-בוֹ לֵאלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים	"And they have burned incense in it [alien place] to other gods"
xxii 9	וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲווּ לֵאלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים וַיַּעַבְדוּם	"And they bowed down to other gods and served them"

NOTES

Chapter I: INTRODUCTION

[1] For a recent summary of hermeneutical issues illustrated in current scholarship, see David K. Jobling, "The Quest of the Historical Jeremiah: Hermeneutical Implications of Recent Literature," USQR, 34 (1978), 3-12.

[2] See Walther Zimmerli, The Law and the Prophets: A Study of the Meaning of the O.T., trans. R. E. Clements (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965), p. 19ff., for an historical review.

[3] Heinrich Ewald, Die Propheten des Alten Bundes, vol. I, 2nd ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1867), pp. 23, 69.

[4] Ewald, p. 9.

[5] Ewald, Commentary on the Prophets of the Old Testament, vol. 3, trans. J. Frederick Smith (London: Williams and Norgate, 1878), p. 61. In Die Propheten des Alten Bundes, vol. II, 2nd ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1868), p. 65, Ewald indicates that Jeremiah was "weich und zart, schüchtern und zurückgezogen, zu wehmuth und trauer gestimmt."

[6] Ewald, Commentary, p. 61.

[7] Julius Wellhausen, Israelitische und jüdische Geschichte, 3rd ed. (Berlin: George Reimer, 1897), pp. 140-44.

[8] D. Carl Heinrich Cornill, Der Israelitische Prophetismus (Strassburg: Karl Truber, 1903), p. 100.

[9] Bernhard D. Duhm, Das Buch Jeremia, Kurzer Hand-Kommentar zum Alten Testament, XI (Tübingen/Leipzig: J. C. B. Mohr, 1907), pp. 242-84.

[10] Moses Buttenwieser, The Prophets of Israel (New York: Macmillan, 1914), p. 10.

[11] A. B. Davidson, "Jeremiah the Prophet," A Dictionary of the Bible, vol. II, ed. James Hastings (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911), p. 330.

[12] Walter Baumgartner, Die Klagedichte des Jeremia, BZAW, No. 32 (Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann Verlag, 1917), pp.

70ff.; Hermann Gunkel, "Einleitungen" to H. Schmidt's Die grossen Propheten, Die Schriften des Alten Testaments, 2. Abteilung, Band 2, 2nd ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1923), p. lxi-lxxii.

[13] Gunkel, p. lx.

[14] John Skinner, Prophecy and Religion: Studies in the Life of Jeremiah (London/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1922; rpt. 1961), pp. 222-23.

[15] Pp. 225-27.

[16] Gerhard von Rad, "Die Konfessionen Jeremias," EvTh, 3 (1936), 273-275.

[17] Gerhard von Rad, Old Testament Theology, Vol. II, trans. D. M. G. Stalker (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 205. See also pp. 276, 201-06.

[18] Volkmar Herntrich, Jeremia, der Prophet und sein Volk (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1938), pp. 31-38. Similarly, Martin Buber, The Prophetic Faith, trans. Carlyle Witton-Davies (New York: Macmillan, 1949; rpt. Harper and Row, 1960), pp. 165, 180-82.

[19] H. J. Stoebe, "Jeremia, Prophet und Seelsorger," TZ, 20 (1964), 385-409.

[20] W. Campe, "Das Verhältnis Jeremias zu den Psalmen," Inaugural dissertation Halle, 1891.

[21] Baumgartner, pp. 36, 42f., 69ff., 91.

[22] S. Mowinckel, "Postscript," JBL, 56 (1937), 264.

[23] Johann Jakob Stamm, "Die Bekenntnisse des Jeremia," Kirchenblatt für die reformierte Schweiz, 3 (1955), 354-57, 370-75.

[24] Artur Weiser, The Old Testament: Its Formation and Development, trans. Dorothea M. Barton, from Einleitung in das Alte Testament (1957), (New York: Association Press, 1961), p. 218.

[25] H. Graf Reventlow, Liturgie und prophetisches Ich bei Jeremia (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1963), p. 259.

[26] P. 209.

[27] P. 259.

[28] Pp. 24-77.

[29] Pp. 149-87.

[30] See, for example, Rolf Knierim, "Old Testament Form Criticism Reconsidered," Int, XXVII (1973), 435-68.

[31] Gunkel, lv ff.; cf. Georg Fohrer, "Remarks on Modern Interpretation of the Prophets," JBL, 80 (1961), 311f.; and Klaus Koch, The Growth of the Biblical Tradition, The Form Critical Method, trans. S. M. Cupitt (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1969).

[32] Georg Fohrer, History of Israelite Religion, trans. David E. Green (London: S.P.C.K., 1973), pp. 261-62

[33] John MacLennan Berridge, Prophet, People, and the Word of Yahweh, Basel Studies of Theology, No. 4 (Zürich: EVZ-Verlag, 1970), p. 211.

[34] Baumgartner, Die Klagedichte des Jeremia.

[35] John Bright, "Jeremiah's Complaints: Liturgy, or Expressions of Personal Distress?" in Proclamation and Presence: Essays in Honour of G. Henton Davies, eds. J. Durham and J. Porter (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1970), pp. 199-204.

[36] Claus Westermann, Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech, trans. Hugh Clayton White (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967), p. 202.

[37] James Muilenburg, "The 'Office' of the Prophet in Ancient Israel," The Bible in Modern Scholarship, ed. J. Philip Hyatt (New York: Abingdon Press, 1965), p. 89.

[38] W. V. Chambers, "The Confessions of Jeremiah: A Study in Prophetic Ambivalence," Diss. Vanderbilt University, 1972, pp. 24-25.

[39] Reventlow, pp. 250-51.

[40] Bright, p. 214.

[41] Berridge, pp. 210-13.

[42] P. 220.

[43] For another extended criticism of Reventlow, see V. Bredenkamp, "The Concept of Communion with God in the Old Testament with Special Reference to the Individual Laments in the Psalms and the 'Confessions' of Jeremiah," Diss. Princeton, 1970, pp. 218-310.

[44] John Bright, Jeremiah, Anchor Bible (Garden City, N.J.: Doubleday, 1965), p. lxix.

[45] Bright, p. cxi.

[46] J. A. Thompson, The Book of Jeremiah (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), pp. 102, 88-92.

[47] Knierim, p. 468.

[48] B. Stade, "'Auf Jemandes Knieen gebären' Gen 30,3. 50,23. Hiob 3,12 und אָמְנַיִם Exod. 1,16," ZAW, 6 (1886), 143-56.

[49] N. Schmidt, "Jeremiah," Encyclopedia Biblica (London: A. & C. Block, 1901), pp. 2388-91.

[50] P. 2371.

[51] Duhm, Das Buch Jeremia.

[52] Gustav Hölscher, Die Propheten. Untersuchungen zur Religiongeschichte Israels (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1914), p. 396.

[53] Hölscher, pp. 276, 269.

[54] S. Mowinckel, Zur Komposition des Buches Jeremia (Oslo/Kristiana: Jacob Dybwad, 1914).

[55] Skinner, p. 102.

[56] H. G. May, "Towards an Objective Approach to the Book of Jeremiah: The Biographer," JBL, 61 (1942), 139-55; also "Jeremiah's Biographer," JBR, 10 (1942), 107-20.

[57] John Bright, "The Date of the Prose Sermons of Jeremiah," JBL, 70 (1951), 15-35.

[58] Otto Eissfeldt, The Old Testament: An Introduction, trans. Peter R. Ackroyd from 3rd German ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p.355.

[59] Ernest W. Nicholson, Preaching to the Exiles: A Study of the Prose Tradition in the Book of Jeremiah (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1970); see especially pp. 71-93.

[60] Winfried Thiel, Die deuteronomistische Redaktion von Jeremia 1-25, WMANT, vol. 41 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1973). Also Die deuteronomistische Redaktion von Jeremia 26-45, WMANT, vol. 52 (1981).

[61] Ernest W. Nicholson, The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah, Chapters 1-25, The Cambridge Bible Commentary on

the New English Bible (Cambridge: University Press, 1973), p. 112.

[62] Erhard Gerstenberger, "Jeremiah's Complaints: Observations on Jer. 15.10-21," JBL, 82 (1963), 393-408. A. H. J. Gunneweg, "Konfession oder Interpretation im Jeremiabuch," ZTK, 67 (1970), 395-416.

[63] Gerstenberg, pp. 398-99.

[64] P. 408.

[65] Gunneweg, p. 414.

[66] P. 416, trans. by Jobling, p. 5.

[67] See, however, Gunther Wanke, Untersuchungen zur sogenannten Baruchschrift, BZAW, No. 122 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1971), especially pp. 144-56, who argues that at least two kinds of materials with quite different redactional histories can be discerned within the "biographical" sections of the book, each presenting a distinctly different picture of Jeremiah. Wanke sees the pictures as incompatible. The implication is, that, since all we have in the Book of Jeremiah are beliefs about the prophet set forth by different traditions, no base line exists for discerning the authentic from the inauthentic on the basis of biographical information.

[68] Peter Ackroyd, "Biblical Classics: I. John Skinner: Prophecy and Religion," ExpTim, 89 (1978), 358.

[69] Hölscher, p. 396; Gerstenberger.

[70] Schmidt, p. 2388.

[71] Gunneweg, p. 399.

[72] Chambers, p. 22.

[73] H. Ewald, Commentary on the Prophets of the Old Testament, Vol. 3, trans. J. Frederick Smith (London: Williams and Norgate, 1878), p. 59; Wellhausen, pp. 140-44; Gunkel, pp. lxiii-lxviii; G. A. Smith, Jeremiah, 4th ed. (New York: Harper & Bros., 1929), pp. 4-5; Skinner, pp. 16, 114; J. Leclerq, "Les 'Confessions' de Jérémie," Etudes sur les Prophètes d'Israël, Lectio Divina 14 (Paris: Du Cerf, 1954), p. 111; H. H. Rowley, The Faith of Israel (London: SCM Press, 1956), p. 36.

[74] Bright, Jeremiah, pp. lxix; Georg Fohrer, Introduction to the Old Testament, trans. David Green (Nashville: Abingdon, 1970), p. 395.

[75] Mowinckel, "Postcript"; Reventlow.

[76] Ewald, Commentary, p. 61; Artur Weiser, The Old Testament: Its Formation and Development, trans. Dorothea M. Barton (New York: Association Press, 1961), p. 211.

[77] Rudolf Kittel, Great Men and Movements in Israel (New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1929; rpt. 1968), p. 334.

[78] Paul Volz, Der Prophet Jeremia, Kommentar zum Alten Testament, 3rd ed., Vol. X (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1930), p. xxvi.

[79] Max Weber, Ancient Judaism, trans. and ed. H. Gerth and D. Martindale (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1952), pp. 271-73.

[80] Bright, Jeremiah, pp. 83-84.

[81] Hans Wildberger, Jahwewort und prophetische Rede bei Jeremia (Zürich: Zwingli, 1942), p. 123; Sheldon Blank, "The Confessions of Jeremiah and the Meaning of Prayer," HUCA, 21 (1948), 354; Berridge, pp. 155-83.

[82] Von Rad, p. 205.

[83] Donald H. Wimmer, "Prophetic Experience in the 'Confessions of Jeremiah'," Diss. University of Notre Dame, 1973, p. 78-82.

[84] p. 86.

[1] Paul Volz, Prophetengestalten des Alten Testaments (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1949), p. 19; translated by Peter L. Berger, "Charisma and Religious Innovation: The Social Location of Israelite Prophecy," ASR, 28 (1963), 944.

[2] Sigmund Mowinckel, Psalmstudien III: Kultprophetie und prophetische Psalmen, SNVAO II, No. 1 (Oslo: I Kommisjon Hos Jacob Dybwad, 1923).

[3] A. R. Johnson, The Cultic Prophet in Ancient Israel (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1944); The Cultic Prophet and Israel's Psalmody (Cardiff: Univ. of Wales Press, 1979).

[4] Alfred Haldar, Associations of Cult Prophets among the Ancient Semites (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells, 1945).

[5] Edward J. Young, My Servants the Prophets (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952), p. 103.

[6] Young, p. 152, cf. pp. 124-152.

[7] Hans Walter Wolff, "Prophecy from the Eighth through the Fifth Century," trans. W. Sibley Towner, Int, 32 (1978), 21.

[8] A. H. J. Gunneweg, Mündliche und schriftliche Tradition der vorexilischen Prophetenbücher (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1959).

[9] Ernst Würthwein, "Amos-Studien," ZAW, 62 (1949/50), 10ff.; Gunneweg, p. 115; Berger, p. 950: ". . . we come to see that the prophet emerges from a traditionally defined office, exercising his charismatic activity in terms of this office, but carried far beyond its traditional definition by his religious message."

[10] H. H. Rowley, "The Nature of Prophecy in Light of Recent Study," HTR, 38 (1945), 26.

[11] Francis I. Anderson and A. Dean Forbes, A Linguistic Concordance of Jeremiah: Hebrew Vocabulary and Idiom, The Computer Bible, vols. 14, 14a (Wooster, Ohio: Biblical Research Associates, 1978).

[12] Jer. xx 2; xxv 2; xxviii 5, 6, 10, 11, 12, 15; xxix 1, 29; xxxii 2; xxxiv 6; xxxvi 8, 26; xxxvii 2, 3, 6, 13; xxxviii 9, 10, 14; xlii 2, 4; xliii 6; xlv 1; xlvi 1, 13; xlvii 1; xlix 34; l 1; li 59. Note that these are all in the later sections of the book.

[13] Jer. ii 26; iv 9; viii 1; xxxii 32; xiii 13.

[14] Jer. ii 8; vi 13 = viii 10; xiv 18; xxiii 11, 34; xvi 11.

[15] The ancient versions suggest two possible interpretations of this verse. While the LXX, Vulg., and Targ. simply indicate that there will be nothing lost if Jeremiah is eliminated, the Pesh. suggests that the institutions of priest, wiseman, and prophet can be preserved only through the demise of Jeremiah. Kimchi says in relation to this phrase: "What am I lacking if he dies? For the Law will not be lost because of this, since the priests know it; and also we have wisemen as advisors; and also we have prophets who will speak to us words of prophecy. And they will not be like this one who has nothing to prophesy about us except evil." W. V. Chambers, "The Confessions of Jeremiah: A Study in Prophetic Ambivalence," Diss. Vanderbilt University, 1972, pp. 79-80, indicates that at least three interpretations of this verse appear in the commentaries: 1) We don't need Jeremiah. We have authority enough without him. (Geisebrecht, Condamin) 2) We are finished with Jeremiah. We have people who know the ways and means at hand. (Duhm, Cornill, H. Schmidt) 3) We will put Jeremiah aside because of his prophecies against priest, wiseman, and prophet (cf. iv 9; viii 9) which have seemingly proved false. (Volz, Baumgartner, Weiser)

[16] Martin Buber, The Prophetic Faith, Trans. Carlyle Witton-Davies (New York: Macmillan, 1949), p. 196-97. For more on the role of intercession see: Franz Hesse, "Die Fürbitte im Alten Testament," Diss. Univ. of Hamburg, 1951; and Evode Beaucamp, Prophetic Intervention in the History of Man (New York: Alba House, 1970).

[17] G. Ernest Wright, "The Lawsuit of God: A Form-Critical Study of Deuteronomy 32," Israel's Prophetic Heritage, ed. B. W. Anderson (New York: Harper & Bros., 1962); Frank M. Cross, "The Council of Yahweh in Second Isaiah," JNES, 12 (1953), 274-77. For an extended analysis of the relevant materials with regard to the Council of Yahweh, see my unpublished thesis, "The Council of Yahweh: An Exegetical Study of an Old Testament Theme," Th.M. Thesis, Gordon-Conwell Theo. Sem., 1973.

[18] Verses 12-14 are probably an intrusion, although there is certainly no unaniminity among the commentators on

this point. There is no contextual support for their appearance here. LXX attempts to solve the problem of incongruity by reading חִילְךָ (vs. 13) as part of verse 12 and giving a conditional interpretation. (LXX perhaps reads vs. 12: הידע ברזל / מלבוש נחשת חילך -- הידע substituted for MT הירע ; מלבוש substituted for מצפון ; and one occurrence of ברזל removed as dittography.) As might be expected, Aquila and Symmachus read much like the MT, while Theodotion (according to Jerome) follows the LXX. The problem does not seem to rest with a corrupted text, but rather with a misplaced one. John Bright, Jeremiah, Anchor Bible (Garden City, N.J.: Doubleday, 1965), p. 109, is probably correct (see also Rudolph) in treating these verses as a damaged varient of Jer. xvii 1-4. Gerald Janzen, Studies in the Text of Jeremiah (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), p. 133, suggests that "this doublet may have arisen like many other doublets in Jeremiah as a scholarly marginal cross-reference." He further suggests that since Jer. xv 11ff. would have stood in the adjacent column to xvii 1-4 in an ancient manuscript, the material that is now xv 12-14 may have originally been a marginal varient or a "correction of haplography in the common archetype of 17.1-4." It would have slipped into chapter xv quite by accident. This is a creative suggestion, but it cannot be assessed beyond the realm of speculation.

[19] An interesting discussion of this point can by found in Prentiss A. Myrick, "Prophetic Intercession in Jeremiah," Th.M. Thesis, Harvard University, 1962.

[20] S. Talmon, "Amen as an Introductory Formula [LXX Jer 15,11]," Textus, 7 (1969), 126. For example, I Kings i 36; Hos. xii 1; Josh. xv 18; Judg. i 14. In parallel Hebrew passages the interchange can be seen in II Sam. xxii 33 = Ps. xviii 33; Ezra ii 2 = Neh. vii 7; Isaiah xlviii 10 = 1QIsa. Talmon also lists proper names where this point can be demonstrated.

[21] Erhard Gerstenberger, "Jeremiah's Complaints: Observations on Jer. 15.10-21," JBL, 82 (1963), 402.

[22] Talmon, p. 127.

[23] Bright, p. 109.

[24] Bright, p. 109.

[25] For example, it is possible to read a root שׂרר pointed שָׂרוֹתִיךָ with a meaning "I ruled over you" or "I governed you" (cf. Judg. ix 22; Isa. xxxii 1; Esther i 22; BDB, p. 797). [For derivation of this form see E. Kautzsch and W. Gesenius, Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar, 2nd Eng. ed., trans. and revised by A. E. Cowley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910; rpt. 1974), p. 176.] Such a reading would render this

statement compatible with Jeremiah's lament in vss. 15-18 and form the beginning of a satisfactory reply to the statement of verse 10, but the root is not found elsewhere with a direct object. Ewald and others (cf. Revised Version) read "I strengthen you" utilizing a similar form (or שְׁרוּתֶךָ ; see BDB, p. 1056) but built on the Aramaic root שׁרר ("to be firm, hard"; Syriac ܫܪܪ "to be firm, consistent, substantial, truthful"). This is also an interesting suggestion, but since the root is intransitive, a Piel or Hiphil form seems warranted which would yield: שְׁרַרְתֶּךָ or הֲשִׁרוֹתֶךָ [S. R. Driver]. Reading with the Kᵉrê. the root in view may be שׁרה (P) possibly pointed as שְׁרִיתֶךָ (BDB, p. 1056 points שְׁרִיתֶךָ) and meaning "I set you free." Rashi refers to this as "the interpretation of Dunash" (Kimchi also records the interpretation) who connects it with Daniel v 12: וּמְשָׁרָא קְטִירִין (Aramaic, literally meaning "to loose difficult knots or problems"). In this case the statement is connected with the incident in Jeremiah xl 4 where the prophet is freed from his fetters by Nebuaradan and is given the choice of going to Babylon. The Targum of Jer. xl 4 uses this root (reading שְׁרִיתֶךָ) to render MT פְּתַחְתִּיךָ and the LXX [LXX xlvii 4] gives a similar reading with ἔλυσά σε . Rashi also indicates that the form is taken by Menahem to mean "your remnant" (presumably reading שְׁאֵרִיתֶךָ = שְׁרִיתֶךָ). "Remnant" is also indicated by the Vulg., Targ., Aquila, and Symmachus. Rashi does not expand upon just how the verse is to be interpreted with this rendering. But Kimchi, who goes to greater length to demonstrate this possibility by citing I Chron. xii 39 where שׁאריח is written defectively as שׁריח (though the Kᵉrê reads שׁאריח), takes this noun to mean "the remainder" which translates in this context as "your end" or "your future." Kimchi continues his comment and rightly quotes Targum Jonathan's support of this position: ". . . that is to say, whatever will remain for you from the time when disaster comes. And thus is Targum Jonathan, 'Surely your end will be for good.'" [A. Sperber, ed., The Bible in Aramaic, Vol. IVB: The Targum and the Hebrew Bible (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973), p. 327, indicates that Targum Jonathan reflects Hebrew שְׁאֵרִיתֶךָ .] Here the interpretation consists of a promise from God that, though disaster is imminent, Jeremiah's future will still involve "good" things. The LXX rendering of the verse does not provide too much help. This verb is rendered as a genitive absolute κατευθυνόντων αὐτῶν which must be translating שׁר or אשׁר rather than one of the possibilities suggested above. Furthermore the pronoun appears as a third person plural possessive, influenced by an attempt to make sense out of this statement when spoken by Jeremiah. A final possibility is to read the root as שָׂרָה (pointed שְׂרִיתֶךָ) with the meaning "to strive or contend with." [See KB or William Holladay, A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the O. T. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1971), p. 355. BDB, p. 975, suggests the meaning "persevere, persist" from an Arabic

root.] The root only occurs 3 other times in the OT. In Gen. xxxii 29, it appears in God's renaming of Jacob after he has wrestled with "a man until daybreak" (vs. 25). The explanation for the new name, Israel, is given as כִּי שָׂרִיתָ עִם-אֱלֹהִים וְעִם-אֲנָשִׁים וַתּוּכָל . The context seems to indicate that שׂרה refers to a battle or conflict which has been fought on both a divine and human level with Jacob. In Hosea xii 4, an allusion is made to this same incident and Jacob is described as follows: וּבְאוֹנוֹ שָׂרָה אֶת-אֱלֹהִים ("And in his manhood [cf. Gen. xlix 3] he contended with God"). The beginning of Hos. xii 5 should also be read with the same verb as it continues to describe the same event. (וַיְשַׂר should here be pointed וַיָּשַׂר and the verse read: "And he contended with the angel [אל-מלאך] and prevailed.") Important to us in these occurrences of the root is not only the meaning of the verb, but also the grammatical constructions in which it is found. In the first instance, it is followed by -עִם while in the Hosea passage it is followed by -אֶת and -אֶל . The possible use of the object marker in at least one case suggests that the verb may be able to take a direct object and retain its intransitive meaning, but this is certainly not strong evidence. Assuming that this meaning is possible, Jer. xv 11 could read: "Surely, I have contended with you for good." None of the above solutions which assume Yahweh as the speaker is particularly strong.

[26] Both Rashi and Kimchi point out that אם-לא is the formula for an oath or vow which adds emphasis. Kimchi draws attention to Ps. cxxxi 2 and Isa. xiv 24 as containing illustrations of this usage.

[27] Bright, p. 109.

[28] If we read with the MT where Yahweh is the speaker, the latter part of the verse could read: "I will cause the enemy to make entreaty to you . . ." This is the interpretation of Targum Jonathan which does not retain the causative sense, but makes it a matter of fact that the enemy will come to enquire of Jeremiah. The events of Jeremiah xl 4 and xlii 2 are probably in view with this interpretation as both Rashi and Kimchi indicate. God is saying that, despite Jeremiah's experience of being cursed now, even the enemy will come making entreaty to him when the time of disaster comes upon them. Another possibility is to read with Isa. xliii 6 where the grammar is similar to the verse under consideration: וַיהוה הִפְגִּיעַ בּוֹ אֶת עֲוֹן כֻּלָּנוּ ("Yahweh has caused to alight on him the iniquity of us all"). The agent in both cases is Yahweh and the verb is followed both by a direct object and an agent who receives the action denoted by בְּ . Following this direction, Jer. xv 11b would read something like: "Surely I have caused the enemy to alight on you . . ." or "surely I have caused the enemy to encounter you . . ." Kimchi suggests that there is

another alternative interpretation of הפגעת meaning "the attack (or strike) of the sword." Thus, he says, that the verse is divided, with the first part ("Surely I have freed you") referring to the prophet, while the second part ("Surely I will strike you") refers to Israel. This does not seem to be a likely interpretation, since it requires a different referent for each of the two pronominal suffixes. It should be evident from this discussion that, as in the case of the first phrase, it is far more difficult to make sense out of the verse when Yahweh is assumed to be the speaker.

[29] Johannes Lindblom, Prophecy in Ancient Israel (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1962), pp. 205-6.

[30] The judgment oracles frequently utilize the language of the Deuteronomic curses. For example, Deut. xxvii 1-10 indicates that the gift of the land is conditional on covenant obedience; Deut. xxviii 21, 22, 58-61 indicates the curse of disease, cf. Jer. xiv 12, 18; Deut. xxviii 3, 16, cf. Jer. xiv 18; Deut. xxviii 25, 26, 49-51, cf. Jer. xiv 7-9, 12, 16, 18; Deut. xviii 22-24, cf. Jer. xiv 3, 4; Deut. xxvii 26, cf. Jer. xiv 18; Deut. xxviii 64, cf. Jer. xiv 22.

[31] Paul Volz, Der Prophet Jeremia, Kommentar zum Alten Testament, 3rd ed., Vol. X (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1930), p. xxvii.

[32] נחם is the most commonly used word indicating the desired result of prophetic intercession. Its basic sense is "to be sorry" and in the Piel it therefore means "to comfort, console" and the in the Niphal the meaning is often "to repent." This is close to man being sorry for his sin. With God, sin is not possible and therefore there is no need for "repentance." A better translation when applied to God is "to be moved to sorrow or compassion for the people in the face of coming evil" (cf. Amos vii 3, 6). [BDB, pp. 636-37.]

[33] Johs. Pedersen, Israel, Its Life and Culture, Vols. I-II, trans. A. Moller and A. Fausboll (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 313.

[34] For a detailed analysis, see K. Goss, "Die literarische Verwandschaft Jeremias mit Hosea," Diss. Berlin 1930; and "Hoseas Einfluss auf Jeremias Anschauungen," NKZ, 42 (1931), 241-65, 327-43.

[35] J. A. Thompson, The Book of Jeremiah, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1980), p. 81.

[36] William McKane, "Prophecy and Prophetic Literature," Tradition and Interpretation, ed. G. W. Anderson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), p. 172.

[37] Examples of symbolic action on the part of earlier prophets is frequent, cf. I Kings xxii 11; II Kings xiii 14-19; Mic. i 8; Isa. 20; vii 3; viii 1; viii 8, 10; Hos. i; etc. Later prophets also used the technique, cf. Ezek. iv 1-17; v 1-17; xii 1-20; xxi 24-28; xxiv 1-27; xxxvii 15-28; Zech. vi 9-15; etc.

[38] For an extended analysis of the advent of "Judaean Royal Theology," see Frank M. Cross, Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), pp. 241-65.

[39] See William McKane, "The Construction of Jeremiah Chapter 21," VT, 32 (1982), 59-73.

[40] The LXX renders the phrase τίς πτοήσει ἡμᾶς ("Who will alarm us?" cf. also the Vulg.), reading the root נחת rather than נוס. But the MT can stand. The phrase "need not imply physical descent from a higher elevation" (cf. Bright, p. 141), though indeed the enemies of Jerusalem would come down upon the city from the hill country (cf. Thompson, p. 472).

[41] For a discussion on the problems of dating these events, see John Bright, A History of Israel, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972), pp. 296-308.

[42] Gerhard von Rad, Old Testament Theology, Vol. II, trans. D. M. G. Stalker (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), pp. 156-60.

[43] Pashhur, who is described in Jer. xx 7 as having "prophesied lies" and must, therefore, be considered as among the prophets, is also called a "priest" and "chief officer in the Temple of the Lord" (xx 1). He must be viewed as the exceptional case, however. Rather than suggesting that the other prophets mentioned in the book were also priests or had official cultic positions, this is an example of a single person functioning in multiple roles.

[44] Bright, Jeremiah, pp. lxxxvii-lxxxviii, follows the suggestion of many others that Hilkiah, his father, may have been descended from the line of Abiathar, one of David's priests who fell into disfavor in Solomon's day (I Kings ii 26f.). [Cf. Thompson, pp. 95, 140.] Since Abiathar was a descendent of Eli, who had cared for the Ark at Shiloh in the days before the monarchy, this would explain Jeremiah's interest both in Shiloh and the theological traditions

associated more with the north. But, as Thompson points out, proof is lacking for this reconstruction.

[45] This is the meaning of verses like Jer. vii 21-23.

[1] Abraham Heschel, The Prophets, vol. II (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), p. 87, sees "pathos" as the fundamental feature of divine reality in the prophetic consciousness.

[2] Hans Wildberger, Jahwewort und prophetische Rede bei Jeremia (Zürich: Zwingli, 1942), p. 107, holds that the words of the prophet and the word of Yahweh are often inseparably bound.

[3] J. A. Thompson, The Book of Jeremiah (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), p. 36n.

[4] Reading הֲ in an asseverative sense to emphasize the bitter effect of the judgment. Cf. E. Kautzsch and Wilhelm Gesenius, Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar, 2nd. Eng. ed., trans. and revised by A. E. Cowley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910; rpt. 1974), pp. 471-72, sec. 149.

[5] John Bright, Jeremiah, Anchor Bible (Garden City, N.J.: Doubleday, 1965), p. 34; Thompson, p. 227.

[6] John Calvin, "The Prophet Jeremiah," Calvin's Commentaries, trans. and ed. Calvin Translation Society (Rpt. Grand Rapids: Associated Publishers and Authors, n.d.), p. 335l.

[7] Reading עליו for לו with LXX, Vulg., Pesh., Symmachus, and Old Latin versions. See also Cant. v 4.

[8] In Ps. xl 9, the תורה is said to be within מעי, expressing a similar generality.

[9] An interesting element of this phrase is the occurrence of the verb דמם expressing a state accompanying the intense emotion. It may simply mean "to be motionless," but in light of the phrase קָמְתִּי בַקָּהָל אֲשַׁוֵּעַ ("I rise up in the assembly; I cry for help") in verse 28, it may very well mean "they will not keep silent" (cf. Amos v 13; Lev. x 3). This, then, may provide an interesting parallel with the verb אַחֲרִישׁ in Jer. iv 19 (see especially the Pesḥ. and Targ.).

[10] Note also Ps. xxii 15b: הָיָה לִבִּי כַּדּוֹנָג נָמֵס בְּתוֹךְ מֵעָי ("My heart was like wax; it melted within my inward parts").

[11] BDB, p. 404.

[12] BDB, p. 297.

[13] Cf. Ezek. xxx 16; Ps. lv 5; Isa. xxiii 5; Joel ii 6; Zech. ix 5. BDB, p. 297, suggests several others in this category as well, but all refer to the figurative quaking of the earth rather than a human being.

[14] אוי-נא לי cf. Jeremiah's use of this lament form in xv 10 and x 19.

[15] See also Jer. l 43 where the King of Babylon respons in the same way to this report.

[16] Ludwig Hugo Köhler, Hebrew Man, trans. Peter Ackroyd (London: SCM Press, 1956), p. 51; D. R. Hillers, "A Convention in Hebrew Literature: The Reaction to Bad News," ZAW, 77 (1965), pp. 86-90; Josef Scharbert, Der Schmerz im Alten Testament, Bonner Biblische Beiträge, herausgegaben von f. Nötscher und Th. Schäfer (Bonn: Peter Hanstein Verlag, 1955), pp. 93, 95.

[17] James Muilenburg, "The Terminology of Adversity in Jeremiah," Translating and Understanding the Old Testament, eds. H. T. Frank and W. L. Reed (New York: Abingdon Press, 1970), pp. 48-50. Note Jer. i 5, 6; xv 10; xx 14, 15, 18; iv 31; cf. xiii 21; vi 24; xx 23.

[18] In the LXX, for example, אחולה is rendered by the general ἄλγω rather than ὠδίνω ("to be in labor") as in Jer. iv 31; vi 24; l 43. In the Vulg., it is rendered by the general doleo rather than dolores ut parturientum in vi 24 and similarly in l 43 or pueperae in iv 31. In the Targ. and Pesh. the word employed is כיבין ("pains") rather than חבלין as in vi 24 and l 43. [Alexander Sperber, ed., The Bible in Aramaic, Vol. IVB: The Targum and the Hebrew Bible (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973), p. 325, suggests that the Targ. reflects a Hebrew text יָחִילוּ.]

[19] Johs. Pedersen, Israel, Its Life and Culture, vols. I-II, trans. A. Moller and A. Fausboll (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 150ff.

[20] Scharbert, p. 24, connects the phrase with אחולה referring to Ps. lv 5, but he admits that the form אחולא makes the syntactical connection unclear.

[21] Hans Wolff, Anthropology of the Old Testament, trans. Margaret Kohl (London: SCM Press, 1974), pp. 41-42, interprets the passage as saying that the prophet is ". . . struck down by a heart attack. For there is no other way of interpreting the words which he groans: . . . Apparently

violent pain or constriction in the region of the heart is here producing a suffocating sense of fear. This is the way that the paroxysm is described which is one of the symptoms of angina pectoris. Perhaps, therefore, 'the walls' of the wildly beating heart are a reference, not so much to the chest as to the pericardium 'inside' the body, which feels as if it is going to burst when the heart is beating wildly with fear." (Cf. Ps. xxxviii 10: "My heart throbs, my strength fails me . . .") Wolff again suggests this type of interpretation in his comment on Ps. xxv 17 (p. 44) which he translates as "Relieve the constriction of my heart and bring me out of my distress" (lit.: "Expand the narrow places of my heart"). This he suggests is another case where the pains of angina and anxiety coincide.

[22] So Bright's translation, p. 317.

[23] נפש appears as a vocative in these Psalm passages in a similar construction to the final line of Jer. iv 19 as it appears in the MT.

[24] BDB, p. 967. William Holladay, A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the O.T. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1971), p. 351, suggests the translation "to be concerned in thought, consideration."

[25] Bright, p. 30.

[26] The kinds of sounds include the "uproar" of the kingdoms (Isa. xiii 4), the noise of the city (Isa. xxxii 14), crying (I Sam. iv 14), the rumbling of chariot-wheels (Jer. xlvii 3), a howl like a dog (Ps. lix 7, 15), the growl of a bear (Isa. lix 11), and the restless pounding of the waves (Jer. v 22 and six times in Jer. alone).

[27] Joseph Ziegler, Beiträge zur Ieremias-Septuaginta (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1958); mentioned by J. Gerald Janzen, Studies in the Text of Jeremiah (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), p. 30.

[28] Janzen, p. 31.

[29] Janzen, p. 31: "It is peculiar that Ⱥ contains both the misplaced gloss in line 5 and the old variants in line 3, in doublet form."

[30] Cf. Judg. xviii 9; I Kings xxii 3. Christopher North, The Second Isaiah (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), p. 115.

[31] James D. Smart, History and Theology in Second Isaiah (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965), p. 89.

[32] See also Job xxx 27, 28 as indicated above.

[33] Bright, p. 32, suggests that while חרשׁ is usually intransitive, one can also read "I cannot still it" i.e. my heart.

[34] H. Wheeler Robinson, "Hebrew Psychology," The People and the Book, ed. A. S. Peake (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925), p. 371.

[35] Sperber, p. 399.

[36] Kautzsch, p. 121, indicates that this form is common in Jeremiah, but prefers to read with the LXX in this case.

[37] ταλαιπωρία is also used in Isa. lix 7 and lx 18 to render שֶׁבֶר , although it usually translates שׁד or שׁדד as in the next phrase of LXX Jer. iv 20. In Isa. lix 7, the very rare word συντριμμόν translates שׁד , the two words Greek words together rendering שׁד וְשֶׁבֶר .

[38] Carl Friedrich Keil, The Prophecy of Jeremiah, Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament, trans. David Patrick and James Kennedy (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1873-74; rpt. Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans, 1964), p. 116, interprets "tents" literally as the "dwellings of those who are lamenting."

[39] Cf. iv 5; vi 1; Joel ii 1, 15; Zeph. i 19 for similar references to the warning trumpet.

[40] Cf. Keil, p. 116; John MacLennan Berridge, Prophet, People, and the Word of Yahweh, Basel Studies of Theology, No. 4 (Zürich: EVZ-Verlag, 1970), p. 170.

[41] LXX renders Hebrew אֵילֵי ("men of power") rather than אֵלִי , but this is without support elsewhere.

[42] Berridge, p. 192.

[43] BHS suggests that תֹּהוּ might be be deleted to correspond with the LXX which utilizes only the word ("nothing") here. This is an unlikely emendation for several reasons. First, it seems clear from the context that it is the creation imagery which is in view. The later Greek translators realized this and added an element to the LXX here to reflect the MT more accurately. This was probably unnecessary since the one word in LXX could have subsumed the whole phrase. Second, בֹּהוּ always appears with תֹּהוּ in BH (although תֹּהוּ at times appears alone). It is not likely that it should appear in isolation here.

[44] Cf. William Holladay, "The Recovery of Poetic Passages of Jeremiah," JBL, 85 (1966), p.406. This is a more likely primary connection than that made by Berridge,

p. 93, who associates the phrase with Isa. vi 11 (cf. Exod. xxiii 29; Lev. xxvi 33; Jer. xxxiii 10).

[45] LXX is reading נצתו ("were burned up"), which would indicate a military conquest. Here, however, things simply fall into ruins. Kimchi notes that the Targ. may also be rendering נצתו , but he prefers the MT.

[46] LXX has a different order for these four verbs. The other ancient versions follow the MT.

[47] The speaker could be either Yahweh or the prophet. LXX adds "says the Lord" to the end of vs. 1 to clarify the matter.

[48] The root is probably חלה rather than חול or חיל (cf. iv 19). Prov. xxiii 35 uses נכה and חלה together in a description of a drunk man: "They struck me but I did not feel pain." (Cf. also Amos vi 6.)

[49] כחש with בְּ seems to have the sense of being untrue or denying a just claim, cf. Josh. xxiv 27; Lev. v 21, 22; Isa. lix 13; Job viii 18. In this case, the people have denied Yahweh because they have denied the message of his prophets.

[50] So Bright, p. 40.

[51] p. 37.

[52] So Rudolph in BHS; Bright, p. 37; Thompson, p. 241; etc.

[53] So S. B. Freehof, The Book of Jeremiah, The Jewish Commentary for Bible Readers (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1977), p. 54.

[54] So Ewald; Graf; KB, p. 142; and recently Bright, p. 49; Thompson, p. 265.

[55] G. R. Driver, "Two Misunderstood Passages of the OT," JTS, n.s. 6 (1955), 82-87; followed by the NEB.

[56] Bright, p. 49.

[57] Bright, p. 64. W. Rudolph in BHS also makes this suggestion.

[58] BDB, p. 114.

[59] Note the appearance of the vocabulary of suffering in Ps. xxxix and the longing not to have been born in Job x 18, 19.

[60] Kautzsch, p. 237.

[61] Hebrew בלה ; Aramaic בלה or בלי ; Arabic قَلَى .

[62] Cf. II Chron. xxx 10.

[63] Bright, p. 62.

[64] Holladay, A Concise Hebrew Lexicon, p. 181.

[65] See also Aquila. Holladay, p. 272.

[66] BDB, p. 752.

[67] Cf. Gen. xliv 33 and Josh. vii 3 for other examples of the form.

[68] Cf. Isa. xxxv 10; li 11; Ezek. xxiii 33; etc.

[69] Cf. Ps. xiii 3: יָגוֹן בִּלְבָבִי יוֹמָם --"sorrow in my heart all the day."

[70] See also the context of Pss. xiii 3; xxxi 11; cvii 39; cxvi 3.

[71] Edwin Hatch and Henry A. Redpath, A Concordance to the Septuagint, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1897; rpt. Graz, Austria: Akademische Druck-u. Verlagsanstalt, 1975). vol. I, p. 140.

[72] Pedersen, p. 313, goes on to connect it with evil: "Evil is in its strongest form a breach, shebher, an infringement upon the whole, which is peace. Breaches are most frequently mentioned in the prophets, in particular Jeremiah. His whole soul is scarred with breaches (10:19) because his people are broken (cf. 8:21; 14:17; 30:12)."

[73] Cf. Num. vi 25; Ps. xxxi 17; lxvii 2; cxix 135; Dan. ix 17; etc.

[74] Cf. II Sam. xix 25. BDB, p. 871.

[75] Cf. LXX which renders שֶׁבֶר in this one instance as ἐκστασις among all the occurrences in the OT. Note Jer. xxiii 14 which is similar to v 30.

[76] See Jer. xviii 16; xix 8; xxv 9, 11, 18; xxix 18; xlii 18; xliv 12, 22; xlix 13, 17; li 37.

[77] See Jer. ii 15; iv 7; xxv 38; xlvi 19; xlviii 9; l 3, 23; li 29, 41, 43.

[78] Janzen, pp. 31, 63. The Greek phrase does not appear in any known Hebrew manuscripts nor in the other

ancient versions. Furthermore, its inclusion here would interrupt a fairly consistent metrical pattern which flows throughout the poetry of this entire section.

[79] ⲗⲁⲗⲉⲓ renders MT תְּמָהוֹן ("confusion") in Deut. xxviii 28, but generally it is seen as equivalent to Latin stupor or Greek ἔκστασις .

[80] Henry Liddell and Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, 9th ed., revised by Henry S. Jones (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940; rpt. 1958), p. 1616, hereafter cited as LSJ.

[81] See Job iii 9 and Ps. lxxiv 20 (LXX lxxiii 20) where σκοτοω renders forms of חשׁך and Job xxx 30 where it renders שחר .

[82] The opposite phenomenon may be seen in the Targum's designation of verse 19b as the prophet's reproof of the people (followed by Rashi) while the other versions (and Kimchi) see it as belonging in the mouths of the people.

[83] In all three instances, the LXX is at variance with the MT. In xiii 17 and xiv 17, LXX reads in the 2nd person, referring to the people in the former text and to Jeremiah in the latter. In neither case is this the preferred reading. In viii 23 [LXX ix 1], the MT employs the idiomatic expression of longing מִי-יִתֵּן (cf. Deut. xxviii 67; Job xxiii 3) which is misinterpreted by the LXX as a question. In the MT, the passages are linked in thought, vocabulary, and grammar.

[84] Bright, pp. 79-80.

[85] P. 64.

[86] P. 73.

[87] Joseph Ziegler, ed., Jeremias, Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graecum, Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis, Vol. XV (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1976), p. 202.

[88] Rashi, on the otherhand, states specifically in his comment on verse 20 that it is Jerusalem who is speaking.

[89] Kimchi places this passage chronologically as spoken after the exile of Jehoiakin.

[90] See also iv 13; vi 4; xiii 27; xlviii 46.

[91] It seems that the sense of וְאֲנִי אָמַרְתִּי here is "And I thought . . ." rather than "And I said . . ." since no audience, save Yahweh who is not specifically addressed

until verse 23, seems to be present. We are here privy to the prophet's thought processes.

[92] In I Kings xxii 34, חלה (H) is used in context of being wounded and מכה appears in verse 35 as the noun indicating the wound of battle received by Ahab.

[93] Also note the use of both רפא and גהה .

[94] Bright, p. 70.

[95] The LXX is the exception rendering the word with κατέλαβέ με ("it overtakes/seizes me"). Hatch and Redpath, p. 735, indicate that this renders נשׂא but it would be the only place in the OT to do so. More likely LXX is misreading the verb as וְהִשְׂגָּנוּ or something similar. Both Aquila and Symmachus correct this error.

[96] William McKane, Proverbs: A New Approach, The Old Testament Library (London: SCM Press, 1970), p. 517.

[97] Jer. x 23-25 was perhaps meant primarily as a corporate confession, but if so, it is the only first person singular confession in these chapters with the possible exception of Jer. xvi 19-20. It seems more likely that in the present context it should be viewed as the prophet's response to a "divine oracle" which is not recorded or preserved. The opening verb, "I know", which is supported by the ancient versions (against Rudolph, who suggests in BHS that the yôd should be considered a dittography), is used in prophetic address to God only here and in Jer. i 6 and is quite possibly an indication that the prophet is repeating a divine response.

[98] Ernest W. Nicholson, The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah, Chapters 1-25, The Cambridge Bible Commentary on the New English Bible (Cambridge: University Press, 1973), p. 128; Preaching to the Exiles: A Study of the Prose Tradition in the Book of Jeremiah (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1970), pp. 87, 101f.

[99] Thompson, p. 378.

[100] Kimchi associates Jer. xv 1 with Ps. lxxxix 6: "Moses and Aaron were among his priests, Samuel was among those who called upon his Name; they called on the Lord and he answered them."

[1] Ernest W. Nicholson, The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah, Chapters 1-25, The Cambridge Bible Commentary on the New English Bible (Cambridge: University Press, 1973), p. 107-11.

[2] John Bright, Jeremiah, Anchor Bible (Garden City, N.J.: Doubleday, 1965), p. 89.

[3] Vs. 13 awkwardly returns to the second person address of Judah. It is a prose parallel of ii 28 and probably a secondary insertion here influenced by vs. 12.

[4] Examples of the process of logical rearrangement are abundant in the secondary literature. See for example H. H. Rowley, "The Text and Interpretation of Jer. 11:18-12:6," AJSLL, 42 (1926), 217-27, who laboriously reconstructs the text as xi 18; xii 6; xi 19; xi 20; xii 1-3; xi 21-23 (with xii 4-5 as an intrusion); or Rudolph in BHS who suggests xi 18; xii 6; xi 19; xi 20a; xii 3; xi 20b; xi 21-23; xii 1-2; xii 4b-5 (vs. 4a being an intrusion). Bright's less fanciful approach, pp. 83-84, [cf. D. C. H. Cornill, Das Buch Jeremia (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1895; rpt. Chr. Herm. Tauchnitz, 1905), pp. 159ff.] which simply reverses the order of the two passages may be a good compromise, but it is still based on the assumption that the two passages belong together and that a smooth reading is necessary.

[5] Note the similarity of vocabulary between xi 18-19 and xii 3-4, an indication of Jeremianic authorship of both passages.

[6] Arthus Peake, Jeremiah, Century Bible, vol. I (New York: Henry Frowde, 1911), p. 182, understands the waw as a connection with the preceding narrative. J. Philip Hyatt, "Jeremiah," Interpreter's Bible, vol. V, ed. George A. Buttrick, et. al. (New York: Abingdon Press, 1956), p. 912, opposes this view. Donald H. Wimmer, "Prophetic Experience in the Confessions of Jeremiah," Diss. University of Notre Dame, 1973, p. 117, retains the waw, suggesting that the first two clauses should be read as conditional to the 3rd (cf. BDB, p. 253), "When Yahweh made known . . ."

[7] Bright, p. 84, supports the LXX, and asks whether the MT has conflated רָאִיתִי and הֹרְאֵנִי to the present form. Rudolph (BHS) posits a vocative omitted by haplography after the verb to deal with the same problem with which Bright struggles in the MT.

[8] Walter Baumgartner, Die Klagedichte des Jeremia, BZAW, No. 32 (Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann Verlag, 1917), p. 30.

[9] Cornill, pp. 150-51.

[10] W. V. Chambers, "The Confessions of Jeremiah: A Study in Prophetic Ambivalence," Diss. Vanderbilt University, 1972, pp. 44-45.

[11] Alexander Sperber, ed., The Bible in Aramaic, Vol. IVB: The Targum and the Hebrew Bible (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973), p. 327.

[12] F. C. Burkitt, "Justin Martyr and Jeremiah xi 19," JTS, 33 (1932), 373.

[13] M.J. Dahood, "Ugaritic Studies and the Bible," Gregorianum, 43 (1962), p. 66. Cf. also BDB, p. 535; Bright, p. 84; J. A. Thompson, The Book of Jeremiah (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), p. 347.

[14] In vs. 21, the MT reads נַפְשֶׁךָ ("your life") while the LXX renders a Heb. נַפְשִׁי ("my life"). The verse should be read as Yahweh's direct address to the prophet, and, therefore, the MT is to be preferred. In vs. 22, the opening formula לָכֵן כֹּה אָמַר יהוה צְבָאוֹת does not appear in the LXX. Bright, p. 84, assumes that the formula is original here, but after the explanatory expansion was added in vs. 21, the formula was redundant and dropped by LXX. Janzen, p. 85, on the other hand, sees the occurrence in vs. 22 as secondary in the MT, brought about by the frequent appearance elsewhere of the formulation before הִנְנִי and a participle (xxiii 2; xxix 32; l 18 cf. xlvi 25). הִנְנִי plus a participle also appears frequently without the formula. Since I do not see vs. 21 as an expansion to the present text, I am inclined to take the shorter LXX text as superior. Rowley, p. 225, emends הַבְּחוּרִים יָמֻתוּ ("the young men will die") on the basis of the LXX to בְּחוּרֵיהֶם יִתְּמוּ ("their young men will be killed"). This suggestion is attractive but unnecessary. It is possible that the LXX added the possessive pronoun for evenness. At any rate, it is readily understood.

[15] The parallel verse in xx 12 is not identical, and while BHS posits its addition in xx 12 from xi 20 rather than the reverse, it is likely that it existed in both contexts at an early stage. Note that the vocabulary which is used in the LXX to render identical Hebrew words in xi 20 and xx 12 is quite different at points, evidence that it was translated twice into Greek.

[16] Against Rowley, p. 223, who omits.

[17] D. Bernhard Duhm, Das Buch Jeremia, Kurzer Hand-Kommentar zum Alten Testament, XI (Tübingen/Leipzig: J. C. B. Mohr, 1907), p. 113; Peake, p. 183.

[18] S. R. Driver, The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah, 2nd ed. (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1906), p. 70.

[19] William Lee Holladay, Jeremiah: Spokesman Out of Time (Philadelphia: United Church Press, 1974), p. 91.

[20] Bright, p. 87.

[21] Rowley, p. 224; Rudolph, BHS; Bright, p. 87.

[22] Baumgartner, p. 59.

[23] Holladay, Spokesman Out of Time, p. 92; also "Jeremiah's Lawsuit with God: A Study in Suffering and Meaning," Int, 17 (1963), 281; cf. John M. Berridge, Prophet, People, and the Word of Yahweh, Basel Studies of Theology, No. 4 (Zürich: EVZ-Verlag, 1970), pp. 161-62.

[24] Carl Friedrich Keil, The Prophecy of Jeremiah, Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament, trans. David Patrick and James Kennedy (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1873-74; rpt. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1964), p. 220; Sheldon Blank, "The Confessions of Jeremiah and the Meaning of Prayer," HUCA, 21 (1948), 344.

[25] Luther.

[26] Vulg.; Pesh.; Holladay, "Jeremiah's Lawsuit," p. 280; Bright, p. 87; Berridge, p. 161; Thompson, p. 348.

[27] LXX; Wimmer, p. 146.

[28] Nicholson, Jeremiah 1-25, p. 115. Rowley, p. 224, deletes the phrase altogether as a dittography of the second line of the preceding distich in his reconstruction (xi 20).

[29] LXX reads λαλεῖτε possibly rendering תְּדַבְּרוּ rather than תָּרִיבוּ. It is also possible, however, that the LXX translators were offended by the thought of bringing a case against God. In xii 1, LXX reads ἀπολογήσομαι ("I will make my defense"), again avoiding the idea of a legal challenge to God.

[30] Baumgartner, p. 34; BDB, p. 181, sec. 3d.

[31] Jer. xxxix 5; cf. II Kings xxv 28 for the same incident and construction.

[32] BDB, p. 86, sec. 1d.

[33] Holladay, "Jeremiah's Lawsuit," p. 281; Berridge, pp. 161-62.

[34] Cf. Baumgartner, p. 34: ". . . und doch muss ich rechten mit dir." Also, Wimmer, p. 147; Bright, p. 86.

[35] Wilhelm Rudolph, Jeremia, Handbuch zum Alten Testament, 3rd ed., no. XII (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1968), p. 85.

[36] A. W. Streane, Jeremiah and Lamentations, The Cambridge Bible (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1913, 1926), p. 80; Chambers, p. 53.

[37] Baumgartner, pp. 52ff.

[38] Isaiah of Trani says that Jeremiah refers to the wicked conspirators of Anathoth. Another suggestion is made in the Targ. and followed by b. Sanh. 648 [I. Epstein, ed., The Babylonian Talmud: Trans. into English with notes, glossary, and indices (London: the Soncino Press, 1952)] which states that the reference is to the armies of Nebuchadnezzar. Vs. 5 subsequently is God's answer to "Why does Nebuchadnezzar prosper?": ". . . if you are thus astonished at the reward wherewith I requited that wicked man for the four steps which he ran in my honour, how much more when I give their due reward to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who ran before me like horses [i.e. eagerly and swiftly]." The argument is that God gave small reward to Nebuchadnezzar which Jeremiah could not understand, so certainly he could not understand God's ways in larger issues.

[39] Hyatt, pp. 950f., argues that Ps. i was written after Jeremiah's time, while Holladay, Spokesman Out of Time, pp. 93, 98f., holds that Ps. i is earlier and that Jeremiah offers two variations on the theme.

[40] Berridge, p. 164; cf. pp. 85ff.

[41] Rudolph, Jeremia, p. 78, suggests that it should be read with xiv 1-6; so also Thompson, p. 355.

[42] On the grammar of this phrase, see E. Kautzsch and Wilhelm Gesenius, Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar, 2nd Eng. ed., trans. and revised by A. E. Cowley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910; rpt. 1974), p. 464. Similar construction can be found in Joel i 20; Job xii 7; Jer. iv 14 and many others. "Plurals of names of animals . . . whether they be masculine or feminine, are frequently construed with the feminine singular of the verbal predicate."

[43] Against Rowley, p. 226; Berridge, p. 164; Bright, p. 83.

[44] Hyatt, p. 916; cf. pp. 848-49. See also Hans Walter Wolff, Gesammelte Studien zum alten Testament (München: chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1964), p. 55; and Thompson, p. 355.

[45] Cf. Keil, pp. 221-22.

[46] So Ferdinand Hitzig, Der Prophet Jeremia, Kurzgefasstes exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament, 2nd ed., vol. III (Leipzig: s. Hirzel, 1866); Peake, p. 186; Chambers, p. 55.

[47] Vss. 5-6 are read as a unit by Cornill, Das Buch Jeremia, pp. 157ff.; Baumgartner, pp. 58-59; Paul Volz, Der Prophet Jeremia, Kommentar zum Alten Testament, 3rd ed., vol. X (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1930), pp. 134ff.; Peake, p. 186; Blank, "The Confessions of Jeremiah," p. 346; Bright, p. 83; etc. On the other hand, H. Graf Reventlow, Liturgie und prophetisches Ich bei Jeremia (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1963), pp. 252ff, 257, sees xii 6 as an isolated verse; and Berridge, p. 127, connects it with the next unit, xii 6-13.

[48] Both Rashi and Kimchi interpret the "footmen" as Jeremiah's townsmen.

[49] LXX reads, "Your feet run and they cause you to faint. How will you be equipped upon horses?" (σοῦ οἱ πόδες τρέχουσι καὶ ἐκλύουσί σε. πῶς παρασκευάσῃ ἐφ' ἵπποις;). The meaning is uncertain, and the LXX can best be understood as a translation of a corrupt Hebrew text.

[50] Hitzig; Kittel, BHK; Rowley, p. 227; Albert Ehrman, "A Note on גאות in Jer XII,5," JSS, 5 (1960), p. 153.

[51] G. R. Driver, "Difficult Words in the Hebrew Prophets," in Studies in O. T. Prophecy, ed. H. H. Rowley (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, rpt. 1957), p. 59; Hyatt, p. 917.

[52] William L. Holladay, A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the O. T. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1971), p. 37; cf. RSV.

[53] G. R. Driver, p. 59, also derives this unusual translation, apparently independently of Kimchi. Driver interprets: "The verse then asks how a man who cannot stand upright in a country undisturbed by storms and tumults will be able to resist a torrential flood, and the application of the question is evident." Cf. note in H. H. Rowley, "The Prophet Jeremiah and the Book of Deuteronomy," Studies in Old Testament Prophecy, ed. H. H. Rowley (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1950), pp. 157-74.

[54] John Skinner, Prophecy and Religion: Studies in the Life of Jeremiah (London/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1922; rpt. 1961), p. 113.

[55] Bright, p. 83.

[56] LXX perhaps reflects a Vorlage for vs. 12: הידע ברזל (הידע substituted for MT הירע ; מלבוש נחשת חילך substituted for מצפון ; and one occurrence of ברזל removed as dittography). LXX: "Can iron be known? Your strength is as bronze armor (clothing)."

[57] Bright, p. 109. Holladay, Spokesman Out of Time, p. 96-97, tries to interpret vss. 11 and 12 together as God's response to Jeremiah's initial complaint in vs. 10. In verse 11, God affirms that he knows exactly what he is doing, while in vs. 12 Jeremiah is to turn his attention from local troubles to the larger conflict when the "brassbound" stubbornness of the people meets the "iron-and-steel" military might of Babylon. This interpretation is consistent with Holladay's interpretation of Jer. xii 5-6 as well, but both cases seem strained.

[58] J. Gerald Janzen, Studies in the Text of Jeremiah (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), p. 133.

[59] The parallel phrases here are אנשי מַצֻּרֶךָ ("men who strive against you") and אנשי מִלְחַמְתֶּךָ ("men who do battle with you").

[60] It is probably a collective term here used as a description of a critical conflict between the army of Jephthah and the Ammonites. It certainly carries the sense of the immediacy of conflict over against the hesitancy of the Ephriamites who were summoned but did not arrive to help Jephthah.

[61] William McKane, Proverbs: A New Approach, The Old Testament Library (London: SCM Press, 1970), p. 603.

[62] Prov. vi 14, 19; x 12; xv 18; xvi 28; xvii 14; xviii 18, 19; xix 13; xxi 9, 19; xxii 10; xxiii 29; xxv 24; xxvi 20, 21; xxvii 15; xxviii 25; xxix 22.

[63] So Bright, p. 109.

[64] McKane, p. 505.

[65] While this is the only place in the OT where ד״ב is used to translate the substantive ב״ד , it is used elsewhere eight times to render verbal forms of δικοζω in legal settings. διακρινω is used to translate ד״ן in

Ps. l 4; Prov. xxxi 9; Zech. iii 7; and רִיב in Deut. xxxiii 7.

[66] E.g. II Kings iv l where a woman complains to Elisha that her dead husband's creditors are about to take away her sons; or I Sam. xxii 2 where many debtors found their way into David's band of outlaws; or Isa. l l where Yahweh asks a rhetorical question reflecting the legal relationship of creditors and debtors.

[67] It is not certain what type of invective is in view here--whether it is a "curse" which is supposed to carry a powerful negation of being or merely verbal abuse (cf. Prov. xxx 10).

[68] It is quite possible that the כָּלָה form here could have been influenced by the appearance of the same form in Jer. xx 7 in a phrase of a a very similar type. Bright, p. 106, and Kautzsch, p. 255n., also show this reconstruction. But unlike Bright, who adds a כִּי to the beginning of the phrase (thought to be lost through haplography), the phrase can now stand with integrity as a summary remark. Bright assumes that it is a resultant phrase to be read in a subordinate relationship to what immediately precedes it.

[69] Erhard Gerstenberger, "Jeremiah's Complaints: Observations on Jer. 15.10-21," JBL, 82 (1963), 399.

[70] Bright, pp. 106, 109.

[71] Cf. Duhm, p. 135; Friedrich Giesebrecht, Das Buch Jeremia, Handkommentar zum Alten Testament, 2nd ed., vol. III,2 (Göttingen: Vandenhoech & Ruprecht, 1907), p. 91; Hyatt, p. 941; etc.

[72] Holladay, Spokesman Out of Time, p. 97.

[73] Gerstenberger, p. 400.

[74] Berridge, pp. 115, 118.

[75] Cf. Deut. xxviii 10.

[76] Cf. also Isa. xliii 7; II Chron. vii 14; Dan. ix 19 from a later period.

[77] Holladay, "The Recovery of Poetic Passages," p. 420, concludes that xvi 1-9 represents "an extended unit of authentic poetry" and is "worthy to be placed alongside . . . 1.4-10 as a central testimony by the prophet of his own self-understanding." Although the material undoubtedly reflects authentic events in the prophet's life, Holladay's enthusiasm is less than convincing.

[78] Franz D. Hubmann, "Anders als er wollte: Jer 20,7-13," BLit, 54 (1981), 179-88.

[79] Aramaic כאב or כיב ; Syriac ܟܐܒ ; Arabic كُئِبَ.

[80] In Isa. xvii 11 notice the similarity of וּכְאֵב אָנוּשׁ with the parallel phrase וּמַכְאִיבִי אֲנוּשָׁה in Jer. xv 18a. This relationship suggests support for an interpretation of Jer. xv 18a as relating to physical pain since the physical seems to be clearly in view in Isa. xvii, despite the fact that Targum Jonathan renders the final phrase of Isa. xvii 11 with כֵּיבִיכוּן לְמַפְתָּח נַפָּשׁ and, thus, defines the pain as a "despair of the soul."

[81] Note especially Jer. xxx 15; xlv 3; li 8; Isa. liii 3, 4; Job xxx 19; Eccl. i 18; ii 23; Lam. i 12, 18.

[82] Josef Scharbert, Der Schmerz im Alten Testament, Bonner Biblishche Beiträge, herausgegaben von F. Nötscher und Th. Schäfer (Bonn: Peter Hanstein Verlag, 1955) supports this conclusion in a thorough analysis of the entire OT.

[83] Ludwig Hugo Köhler, Hebrew Man, trans. Peter Ackroyd (London: SCM Press, 1956), p. 18: "We must, however, point out here that the Old Testament contains no expression of opinion at all as to what is healthy and what is sick. . . . Furthermore the language of illness is very little developed."

[84] In Lev. xiii 2 plaga is used of leprosy and in Deut. vii 19 it refers to the "plagues" of Egypt.

[85] The reconstruction may be יִרְוֵנִי if we follow the Syriac. Pesh. utilizes the verb ܪܘܐ which is commonly Hebrew רָוָה . This is certainly not preferable, however, since the Syriac is actually employing a common idiom in its rendering which could account for its use of a verbal form for מָצָא . Thus it is not necessary to postulate a different Hebrew Vorlage to readily account for the Pesh.'s paraphrastic treatment.

[86] James Muilenburg, "The Terminology of Adversity in Jeremiah," Translating and Understanding the Old Testament, eds. H. T. Frank and W. L. Reed (New York: Abingdon Press, 1970), p. 61, suggests that the similarity of vocabulary indicates that Jeremiah was "strongly under the influence of his spiritual predecessor, Hoseah."

[87] Both the Targ. and Vulg. accurately reflect the MT here. The Pesh., however, interprets the problem as a lack of medicine: ܘܠܐ ܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܐܣܝܐ ("and no medicine to heal"). This is misleading if my interpretation is correct. The LXX again has either misread the text or has a different Vorlage. It reads πόθεν ἰαθήσομαι ("From whence will I

be healed?") which could be a rendering of מְאֵין אִרָפֵא and could be accounted for by haplography of the ה and a misreading of the remaining prefix. There is certainly no evidence that the LXX reading is to be preferred.

[88] Aubrey Johnson, The Vitality of the Individual in the Thought of Ancient Israel (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1964), pp. 104-7, suggests the "wealth of meaning latent for the Israelite in the description of Yahweh . . . as a 'Spring of Living Water.'" Yahweh is the "Giver of Life," the Creator who makes himself felt on the plane of history.

[89] Skinner, p. 34.

[90] Cf. J. L. Mihelic, "Dialogue with God. A Study of Some of Jeremiah's Confessions," Int, 14 (1960), 48; H. Kelley, "Jeremiah's Concept of Individual Religion," RevExp, 8 (1961), 431; Bright, Jeremiah, p. c; G. Fohrer, Introduction to the Old Testament, trans. David Green (Nashville: Abingdon, 1970), p. 395.

[91] William L. Holladay, The Root **shûbh** in the Old Testament with Particular Reference to Its Usage in Covenantal Contexts (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1958), p. 128.

[92] P. 131.

[93] Berridge, p. 133.

[94] The interpretations of Trani and Luzzato are quoted by S. B. Freehof, The Book of Jeremiah, The Jewish Commentary for Bible Readers (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1977), p. 109.

[95] Baumgartner, p. 38; Gerhard von Rad, "Die Konfessionen Jeremias," EvTh, 3 (1936), 267; Bright, p. 112; etc.

[96] Berridge, p. 208.

[97] Pp. 210-20.

[98] Georg Fohrer, p. 395.

[99] Bright, p. 119.

[100] Thompson, p. 423.

[101] Peake, p. 221; Hyatt, p. 950; Bright, p. 119.

[102] Nicholson, Jeremiah 1-25, p. 148.

[103] Thompson, p. 420-21, follows the argument of Holladay, Spokesman Out of Time, pp. 98f.

[104] Baumgartner, p. 42, sees a formulaic connection between these verses and hymnic introductions found in some Babylonian and Assyrian Klagelieder; cf. Berridge, p. 137. But, Chambers, p. 70, can find no such connection and Bright, p. 119, (and many others) see the confession beginning in vs. 14.

[105] Rudolph, Jeremia, p. 117; John Bright, "Jeremiah's Complaints: Liturgy, or Expressions of Personal Distress?" in Proclamation and Presence: Essays in Honour of G. Henton Davies, eds. J. Durham and J. Porter (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press), esp. pp. 205ff.

[106] Bright, Jeremiah, p. 119.

[107] The MT adds אֶת-יהוה at the end of the line which is a very early, correct gloss appearing in all the ancient versions.

[108] Duhm, Das Buch Jeremia, p. 148; followed by Rudolph, Jeremia, p. 116, and in BHS.

[109] There are frequent examples of the verb בוא connected with the "word of Yahweh" in prophetic contexts (e.g. Isa. v 19; Deut. xviii 22; Jer. xxviii 9; Ezek. xxxiii 33; cf. Ezek. xii 21-28). Cf. Berridge, p. 138.

[110] Sperber, p. 327.

[111] p. 362.

[112] Cf. NEB: "It is not the thought of disaster that makes me press after thee."

[113] Cf. Cornill, pp. 217-18; Giesebrecht, p. 102; Hyatt, p. 957.

[114] Baumgartner, p. 40; cf. Rudolph, Jeremia, p. 116; Reventlow, p. 229.

[115] Skinner, p. 205; Bright, Jeremiah, p. 116n.; Thompson, p. 424-25n.

[116] Berridge, p. 140.

[117] Artur Weiser, Das Buch des Propheten Jeremia, Das Alte Testament Deutsche, 6th ed., nos. XX-XXI (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1969), p. 143; cf. Chambers, p. 69.

[118] Berridge, p. 144-45.

[119] Cf. Weiser, p. 149; Berridge, pp. 142-44, 148.

[120] Baumgartner, p. 43.

[121] Chambers, pp. 75, 77.

[122] Reventlow, p. 239.

[123] Rashi says that this refers only to the men of Anathoth.

[124] Berridge, p. 149.

[125] Cf. Bright's translation, p. 116.

[126] The Pesh. reads, "and let us smite him in/on his tongue (ﺤﻠﺴﻪ)," indicating a Vorlage בִּלְשׁוֹנוֹ . While this is accepted by Rudolph (BHS) and others, it is not preferred. The Pesh. is probably reading a dittography of the waw which introduces the next phrase.

[127] So also Rashi and Kimchi.

[128] Janzen, p. 90.

[129] Cf. Skinner, p. 206, following Duhm and Cornill.

[130] The verb נגר [H] suggests that the people will be hurled down and defenselessly slaughtered; cf. Bright, p. 124. But Kimchi offers the suggestion that it means that they shall be "poured out," that is, their blood shall be spilt by the sword. He provides Ps. lxiii 11 as a further example.

[131] תהיינה is the usual form (appearing over 40 times in the OT, including three times in Jer.). According to Solomon Mandelkern, Veteris Testamenti Concordantiae, 4th ed. (Tel-Aviv: Schockin Publishing House, 1978), p. 323, only two times (here and in Jer. xlviii 6) does the MT preserve the form תהינה . It is also found in 4QJer^{a} which further attests to the early appearance of this atypical form.

[132] שיחה should be read with the Ḳ^{e}rê as שׂוּחָה as in vs. 20. LXX apparently reads it as שָׂיחַ . LXX also has "against me" (Vorlage: לי or עלי) at the end of the line rather than לרגלי . Janzen, p. 28, assumes the LXX to be the superior text on the basis of Ps. cxxxix [LXX cxl] 6 and cxli [LXX cxlii] 4, with the MT incluenced by Lam. i 13. It is just as likely that LXX is reading a text with a few letters missing.

[133] b. B. Qam. 74 [Epstein]: Rabbi Eleazar suggests the interesting interpretation that Jeremiah's persecutors

were accusing him of illicit sexual intercourse with a harlot, since a harlot is a "deep pit" (cf. Prov. xxiii 27). Rabbi Samuel b. Nahmani goes further to suggest that he is accused of adultery with another's wife, since they tried to slay him and relations with a harlot does not carry the death penalty (cf. Lev. xx 10 for punishment for adultery).

[134] BDB, p. 497, cf. Ps. lxxix 9.

[135] Bright, p. 125: ". . .let them, like the criminals they are, be tripped and thrown sprawling before the judge. And let him (next colon) not wait for calm to prevail, but 'throw the book at them' in his anger."

[136] The word הַמַּהְפֶּכֶת seems to indicate something like "stocks" (cf. Jer. xxix 26). Rashi says they are fetters. Kimchi, quoting his father, describes two pieces of wood placed around the prisoner's neck--a sort of "pillory."

[137] LXX renders the epithet as ἢ Μέτοικον ("the Exile"). This is the only time that the Heb. phrase is not rendered fully in the LXX. Janzen, p. 73, holds that there is no clear reason why the LXX should have shortened the phrase in this instance, so it is probably the Heb. which has augmented an originally shorter form from other passages, especailly xx 10. But since the Heb. phrase is translated differently in each occurrence in the LXX (vi 25: παροικεῖ κυκλόθεν ; xx 10: συναθροιζομένων κυκλόθεν ; xlvi 5 [LXX xxvi 5] περιοχόμενοι κυκλόθεν ; xlix 29 [LXX xxx 7] ἀπώλειαν κυκλόθεν), and this is the only time in which it is recognized as an epithet, it is possible that the LXX represents a conflation.

[138] This probably occurred in the deportation of 597 B.C., since Jer. xxix 26 (dated 594 B.C.) includes a reference to another person (Zephaniah ben Masseiah) in the position once held by Pashhur.

[139] Abraham Heschel, The Prophets, vol. I (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), p. 113-14; also cf. Rudolph, Jeremia, p. 113; Holladay, Spokesman Out of Time, p. 101; Bright, p. 132; Berridge, p. 152.

[140] Bright, pp. 129, 132.

[141] Berridge, pp. 154-55.

[142] T. H. Robinson, Prophecy and Prophets in Ancient Israel, 2nd ed. (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co., 1953), p. 137.

[143] BDB, p. 277.

[144] Cf. Pss. xxii 6; cxlii 2, 6; Hab. i 2; Lam. iii 8; Job xix 7; also Jer. xxv 34; xxx 15; xlvii 2.

[145] Hans Schmidt, Die grossen Propheten, Die Schriften des Alten Testaments (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1915), p. 274; and Skinner, p. 207, emend the text on the basis of the LXX to read אֶשְׂחַק ("I am mocked"), but this is unnecessary and destroys the parallelism within the first phrase. Furthermore the LXX reflects a significant alteration of the MT beyond this single word, and any reconstruction which assumes that the LXX reflects a superior text should make additional emendations in order to be consistent.

[146] Berridge, p. 153; cf. Bright's translation, p. 48, "Outrage! Robbery!" The colon has been variously interpreted as 1) a characterization of the sin of the people which necessitated judgment (Friedrich Nötscher, Jeremias, Echterbibel, No. 2 [Wursburg: Echter-Verlag, 1947], p. 71); 2) the prophet's specific response to his threatened ill-treatment (Baumgartner, p. 64); 3) a description of the judgment proclaimed by Yahweh (Gerhard von Rad, "Die Konfessionen Jeremias," p. 271; Blank, "The Confessions of Jeremiah," pp. 346-47); 4) a reference to Jeremiah's personal plight as well as the national destruction (Weiser, Jeremia, p. 170). For an evaluation of the ancient versions, see chapter below.

[147] כִּי should be read as an intensive here, cf. BDB, p. 472, rather than an equivalent of ὅτι in the LXX. The statement is meant to contrast with the proclamation of vs. 8a, not be a reason for it.

[148] Also Bright, p. 132; Thompson, p. 456; etc.

[149] Kimchi comments on the masculine form עֵצֶר and the feminine form בְּעֶרֶת both used in relation to "fire" (אֵשׁ). Using Job xx 26 and Num. xxi 28 as examples, he explains that "fire" is found as both a masculine and feminine noun.

[150] Leslie, p. 152.

[151] BDB, p. 617, says that the verb means "to play the informer concerning" (cf. Josh. ii 14, 20; Job xvii 5; Lev. v 1; Prov. xxix 24).

[152] LXX: "For I have heard the reproach of many gathering round, 'Conspire! Let us conspire together against him, all his friends: watch his intentions, . . .'" Vulg.: "For I heard the reproaches of many, and terror on every side, 'Persecute him! Let us persecute him!' And from all the men who were my friends and continued at my side, '. . .'" Pesh.: "For I heard the evil intentions of many, who were gathering from every side inquiring of my

peace with their mouth, but hating me in their heart, saying, 'Point him out to us; we will stand against him; . . . .'"

[153] Holladay, Spokesman Out of Time, p. 102.

[154] The ancient versions do not interpret the phrase in an unusual manner. LXX, Vulg., and Pesh., all indicate that the epithet means "mighty warrior" or the equivalent. The Targ. alters the phrase slightly to avoid the anthropomorphism, saying that it is God's "word" which is the prophet's support. Kimchi says that it is possible to interpret the phrase as God establishing Jeremiah as a dread warrior to stand against the enemy.

[155] Both Rashi and Kimchi, following the Targ., make a point of explaining this phrase as "they did not succeed." Kimchi suggests that the meaning is the same as in I Sam. xviii 14. The LXX renders the last line as ὅτι οὐκ ἐνόησαν ἀτιμίας αὐτῶν αἰ δι᾽ αἰῶνος οὐκ ἐπιλησθήσονται ("for they did not perceive their disgrace which shall never be forgotten"). Both the Vulg. and Pesh. read "they did not understand . . ."

[156] Rudolph (BHS), for example, sees the verse as an addition here. Wimmer, p. 309, holds that the differences in the first lines of xi 20 and xx 12 are significant enough to suggest an independence between the verses. LXX uses different words to render each verse, indicating at least that the verses have been viewed independently for a long time.

[157] William L. Holladay, "Style, Irony, and Authenticity in Jeremiah," JBL, 81 (1962), 52-54.

[158] Holladay, Spokesman Out of Time, p. 103.

[159] Holladay, "Style, Irony, and Authenticity," p. 54.

[160] Chambers, p. 96.

[161] Baumgartner, p. 67; Rudolph, Jeremia, p. 133.

[162] Kimchi; Rudolph, p. 134; Bright, p. 126; etc.

[163] Thompson, p. 463.

[164] G. von Rad, "Die Konfessionen Jeremias," pp. 271-72.

[165] Skinner, p. 208; Rudolph, p. 132; Bright, p. 130; etc., indicate this punctuation. However, Hans Schmidt, p. 273; J. Leclerq, "Les 'Confessions' de Jérémie," Etudes sur les Prophètes d'Israël, Lectio Divina 14 (Paris: Du Cerf,

1954), p. 142; Wimmer, p. 309; etc., suggest that the question in the first line is meant to be answered by the second line. Wimmer notes that למה is used frequently in expectation of a negative reply. "To what purpose . . .?" is the question with the response, "to no purpose" (cf. Gen. iv 6; Exod. ii 13; Num. ix 7; Amos v 18-20). In this view, Jeremiah accepts that he came from the womb for no reason except toil and anguish.

[166] Cf. Bright, p. 130.

[167] Nicholson, p. 170.

[168] Cf. Rudolph, p. 132; also BHS; following Duhm, Cornill, etc.

[169] Bright, p. 130.

[170] M. J. Dahood, "Denominative riḥḥam, 'to conceive, enwomb,'" Bib, 44 (1963), 204f.

[171] For another summary of the sources of Jeremiah's suffering, see James Muilenburg, "The Terminology of Adversity in Jeremiah," Translating and Understanding the Old Testament, eds. H. T. Frank and W. L. Reed (New York: Abingdon Press, 1970), p. 62.

[1] Gerhard von Rad, Old Testament Theology, vol. II, trans. D. M. G. Stalker (New York: harper and Row, 1965), p. 209.

[2] Sigmund Mowinckel, "The 'Spirit' and the 'Word' in the Pre-exilic Reforming Prophets," JBL, 53 (1934), 199-227.

[3] Mowinckel, p. 200. Also noted by Friedrich Giesebrecht, Die Berufsbegabung der alttestamentlichen Propheten, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1897), p. 142; and others.

[4] Reading וְהַדָּבָר אֵין בָּהֶם for MT וְהַדָּבָר, cf. LXX.

[5] The idea-complex of the council of God is classically portrayed in I Kings xxii 15-28 which is also set in the context of a confrontation between a true prophet and the court prophets. God's true prophet is the one who has been given permission to stand in the heavenly court. There he hears the lawsuit presented against the people and is often given the right to intercede for the people in the role of defense counsel. After the verdict is decided, the prophet becomes the messenger of the court. It is not altogether clear whether this passage in Jeremiah shares the same idea-complex. The vocabulary is certainly that used elsewhere of the heavenly court, particularly the use of עמד. And the context supports this imagery when compared with other places outside Jeremiah where the heavenly court is mentioned. But סוד is an ambiguous designation and does not require a technical interpretation. Elsewhere in Jeremiah it refers to a specific group or intimate circle of people (cf. vi 11; xv 17) rather than to a conversation involving counsel (cf. Prov. iii 32; xv 22; xi 13; Ps. xxv 14). If the verse does have the heavenly court in view, it is puzzling that Jeremiah does not employ the imagery elsewhere in relation to the receipt of God's word, especially since he has a special interest in this matter of revelation.

[6] The LXX of vs. 18b reads καὶ εἶδε τὸν λόγον αὐτοῦ ("and has seen his word") indicating support for describing the word as "seen." In fact, וַיִּרְאֵם in the MT may be an addition since it eases the difficulty of the reading. Pesh. and Vulg. do in fact try to change the reading slightly, because of the awkward imagery. The former does this by adding an extra pronoun and rendering "and has seen

him and heard his word," while the latter attempts another solution by reading "see" with the first line and rendering "For who has stood in the council of God and observed, and has heard his discourse?". Note also the introductory phrase in Jer. ii 31 which reads הַדּוֹר אַתֶּם רְאוּ דְּבַר-יְהוָה LXX employs an entirely different phrase here, so it is possible to question its retention in the MT text. Nevertheless it is an interesting parallel in word usage. ראה may either be utilized here with a meaning "to consider," or the command may mean that the people should take a look at the imagery all around them which the prophet summons to proclaim God's truth. This latter explanation fits the context of the proclamation which follows.

[7] The evidence is actually inconclusive as to what Jeremiah's understanding of the relationship between dreams and revelation is. Certainly in this passage, dreams fall on the side of falsehood and are not legitimized.

[8] Cf. BHS. Or אֻכְלָם is also possible, although συντελειν never translates אכל elsewhere.

[9] John Skinner, Prophecy and Religion: Studies in the Life of Jeremiah (London: Cambridge University Press, 1922), p. 204. J. Philip Hyatt, "Jeremiah," Interpreter's Bible, vol. V (New York: Abingdon Press, 1956), p. 942.

[10] Walther Zimmerli, Ezechiel, Bibischer Kommentar, No. XIII, Vol. I (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1959), pp. 77-78, suggests that Ezekiel's action or vision (Ezek. ii 8 - iii 3) was prompted by this phrase. Such an argument further reinforces the authenticity of the MT.

[11] William Holladay, "Jeremiah and Moses: Further Observations," JBL, 85 (1966); Also in Holladay's "A Fresh Look at 'Source B' and 'Source C' in Jer." VT, 25 (1975), p. 409; Jeremiah: Spokesman Out of Time (Philadelphia: United Church Press, 1974), pp. 22, 97.

[12] Holladay, "Jeremiah and Moses," pp. 25ff.

[13] Holladay, "A Fresh Look," p. 23,

[14] John Berridge, Prophet, People, and the Word of Yahweh, Basel Studies of Theology, No. 4 (Zürich: EVZ-Verlag, 1970), p. 120.

[15] To be fair, I must point out that this interpretation has support as early as the ancient versions. The Pesh. renders the phrase ("And I observed your commands and did them"). Here the substitution of "commands/commandments" for the common "words" (--see the following line where the singular of this appears) indicates that the interpreter

assumes that the prophet is affirming his obedience to the law here as a part of his claim to righteousness. I believe that the Pesh. has read the intent of the passage within its context quite correctly, but there is no reason to assume that the phrase does not refer to direct revelations. As Wycliffe Chambers, "The Confessions of Jeremiah: A Study in Prophetic Ambivalence," Diss. Vanderbilt University, 1972, p. 64, rightly observes, it is the divine word which is encountered by the prophet and not the Torah. Cf. Walter Baumgartner, "Die Klagedichte des Jeremia," in Beihefte zur ZAW, 32 (Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann Verlag, 1917), p. 35; Wilhelm Rudolph, Jeremia, Handbuch zum Alten Testament, 3rd ed., No. XII (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1968), p. 108.

[16] H. J. Stoebe, "Jeremia, Prophet und Seelsorger," TZ, 20 (1964), pp. 403-4; Berridge, p. 119-21.

[17] Berridge, p. 120.

[18] Berridge, p. 119.

[19] Following Zimmerli, I, p. 11.

[20] Berridge, p. 120, again following Zimmerli, I, p. 79.

[21] There is confusion in the second line, the Ketib being plural and the Qerê being singular. LXX and the verb form וַיִּהְיוּ support the Qerê. John Bright, Jeremiah, Anchor Bible (Garden City: Doubleday, 1965), p. 106, omits דִּבְרֵי altogether as a dittography or mistaken gloss from the preceding line, following Duhm and Giesebrecht.

[22] Rudolph, p. 99.

[23] Stoebe, p. 404n.

[24] BDB, p. 594, suggests that נִמְצָא [N] means "appeared" or "were recognized" here, which roughly follows the same direction which I am pursuing.

[25] Alexander Sperber, ed., The Bible in Aramaic, Vol. IVB: The Targum and the Hebrew Bible (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973), p. 47, calls this a "free translation."

[26] שכח Ethpeel (אשתכח) is employed in all other instances in the Targ. of Jeremiah to translate נמצא [N] (ii 26, 34; v 26; xi 9; xli 3, 8; xlviii 27; l 20, 24; lii 25) with the exception of xxix 14 where the Targ. glosses for theological reasons (although שכח is used to translate נמצא [Q] in xxix 13).

[27] The other four occasions are all in prose portions, but as Berridge, p. 121, has noted, the terminology is not

Deuteronomic but characteristically Jeremianic.

[28] Holladay, "Jeremiah and Moses," pp. 23-24.

[29] Holladay, Spokesman Out of Time, p. 97; cf. Abraham Heschel, The Prophets (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), pp. 114-15.

[30] Berridge, p. 121f.

[31] Rashi reads לנביאים as part of the first clause rather than as a title to the section. But since Jeremiah's heart is not likely to be breaking "for the prophets," he must construe it as his heart breaking "because of the words of the prophets who are saying, 'you will have peace.'" The sense of the verse and the poetic line is much better served by reading לנביאים as a title.

[32] See LXX which does not represent vs. 10a and otherwise deviates from the MT. Also note the rather awkward MT where the possessive pronominal ending on מְרוּצָתָם does not have a clear referent because of the intrusion of vs. 10b.

[33] E. Kautzsch and Wilhelm Gesenius, Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar, 2nd Eng. ed., trans. and revised by A. E. Cowley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910; rpt. 1974), p. 407, explains that the definite article which is expected in a comparison, e.g. כַּשִּׁכּוֹר in Isa. xxiv 20, is "regularly omitted when the object compared is already defined by means of an attribute (or relative clause, Jer. 23.9, Ps. 17.12). . ."

[34] BDB, p. 717.

[35] J. Payne Smith, ed., A Compendious Syriac Dictionary (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903, rpt. 1976), p. 398. R. Payne Smith, ed., Thesaurus Syriacus (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901) simply translates it as quem vinum devicit ("whom wine overcomes/subdues").

[36] BDB, p. 934.

[37] William Holladay, A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the O. T. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1971), p. 337.

[38] C. Gordon, Ugaritic Manual, ii, I Aqht:32; 3 Aqht: 20, 21, 31. G. R. Driver, Canaanite Myths and Legends, 2nd ed., ed. John C. L. Gibson (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1978), A III; 20, 21, 31, 32.

[39] See also Rashi and Kimchi, both of whom connect it with the hovering action of a bird. Also G. von Rad, Genesis, Old Testament Library, revised ed. (Philadelphia:

Westminster Press, 1972), p. 49, associates Jer. xxiii 9, Deut. xxxii 11, and Gen. i 2, and sees agitation like a divine storm (cf. Dan. vii 2).

[40] Hans Wolff, Anthropology of the Old Testament, trans. Margaret Kohl (London: SCM Press, 1974), p. 42, sees this particular passage as a purely physical description of a disorder (heart attack? cf. p. 42 on Jer. iv 19) which comes under the onslaught of Yahweh's word. Cf. Ps. xxxviii 10.

[41] Bright, pp. 147, 151.

[42] Cf. Aubrey Johnson, The Vitality of the Individual in the Thought of Ancient Israel (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1964), pp. 75-87; Wolff, pp. 40-58. For examples, note I Sam. i 8; ii 1; Prov. xv 13; xvii 22; cf. Wolff, pp. 44-45.

[43] Cf. Jer. iv 19; Prov. xxiii 17; Px. xxv 17; Isa. vii 2, 4; etc.

[44] Wolff, p. 46.

[45] Wolff, p. 50.

[46] Job xii 3; Prov. xix 8; Ecc. x 2; Job xxiv 34.

[47] I Sam. xxiv 6; II Sam. xxiv 10; II Chron. xxiv 27; Ps. li 10.

[48] II Sam. vii 3; I Sam. xiv 6f.; Isa. x 7; Ps. xxiv 4; Prov. xxi 2.

[49] Prov. iv 20-27; Isa. vi 10; II Sam. vii 27.

[50] Ex. xxxv 21; Num xvi 28; Deut. vi 5; Jer. iii 10.

[51] The other plausible interpretation is that "heart" simply is a designation of the "self," as in xxiii 16 where the false prophets "speak visions of their heart,"--in other words, "their own views." Thus the prophet would be saying "I am crushed." But this would not account for the careful use of בְּקִרְבִּי .

[52] Cf. xxiii 12, 15, 16, 39, 40.

[53] Or the text may read כחזקת יד with many manuscripts and the Dead Sea Isaiah scroll (1QIs[a]).

[54] Cf. Ezek. iii 14; xxxvii 1; xl 1; etc.

[55] Holladay, Spokesman Out of Time, p. 77, relates the phrase בדד ישבי metaphorically to the similar expression

regarding the leper in Lev. xiii 46. Jeremiah is a "social leper." H. Graf Reventlow, Liturgie und prophetische Ich bei Jeremia (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1963), p. 224, also relates it to this passage but as a more direct picture of sickness. Ludwig Köhler, Hebrew Man, trans. Peter Ackroyd (London: SCM Press, 1956), p. 89, suggests that "I sat alone" should be connected with Jer. xvi 2 and deals with the lack of a wife, though he also suggests elsewhere (p. 102) that Jeremiah means that he cannot sit with the sôd. While these suggestions are helpful in extending the image of Jeremiah's plight, it is more likely that the phrase should be read as a simple, literal statement of his isolation as in Lam. iii 28: יֵשֵׁב בָּדָד וְיִדֹּם כִּי נָטַל עָלָיו ("Let him sit alone and be silent, for it weighs upon him" or ". . .He has imposed 'it' upon him."). The situation described in this lament bears resemblance to Jeremiah's evaluation of his condition.

[56] זעם is parallel to אף (used 24x in Jer.) in Isa. x 5, 25; xxx 27 cf. בְּזַעְמִי-אַפּוֹ in Lam. ii 6; parallel to חרון אף (8x in Jer.) in Ps. lxix 29; Zeph. iii 8; parallel to עברה (one occurrence in Jer.) in Ps. lxxviii 49; Ezek. xxi 36; xxii 31; and parallel to קצף (4x in Jer.) as mentioned above.

[57] Kimchi supplies החמה in his gloss of the text to make this clear. See x 25 where שְׁפֹךְ חֲמָתְךָ appears.

[58] Note: the rest of the verse is also recast in LXX and reads: "I did not sit down in their assembly as they jested, but I feared/was cautious because of your hand; I sat alone, because I was filled with bitterness." It is Jeremiah's fear of God's power that motivates him to avoid the merrymaking of his peers, rather than his response to their wickedness. His loneliness can almost be viewed as a "persecution-complex."

[59] Bernhard Duhm, Das Buch Jeremia, Kurzer Hand-Kommentar zum Alten Testament, XI (Tübingen/Leipzig: J. C. B. Mohr, 1901, 1903, 1907); Norman Habel, Jeremiah/Lamentations, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis/London: Concordia, 1968), p. 80; Bright, p. 44; Ernest Nicholson, The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah, Chapters 1-25, The Cambridge Bible Commentary on the New English Bible (Cambridge: The University Press, 1973), p 67; etc.

[60] S. R. Driver, The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah, 2nd ed. (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1906), p. 34.

[61] See also Obad. 5, 6.

[62] Cf. Kautzsch, p. 342, sec. 113n.

[63] Note: there are further complications with the last line of verse 9 as witnessed in the versions. MT סַלְסְלוּהָ is a hapax legomenon understood by LXX and the Vulg. as a basket (reduplicated stem from סַל). Therefore the "gleaning" image as it continues in this line is at least partially obscured. LXX reads: "Turn back as a grape-gatherer to his basket"; while the Vulg. reads: "Turn back your hand like a grape-gatherer into the basket." The suggestion by by Ewald, Hitzig, Graf, Giesebrecht, and others (see BDB, p. 700) that סַלְסְלוּהָ refers to "branches" (see also the use of שׂוֹרֵג BDB, p. 999, cf. Ezek xxxviii 12) renders the image clear.

[64] This, indeed, must be the meaning of the grammatical construction of this last line, rather than "the word of the Lord has become an object of reproach for them," in light of the identical grammatical construction in Jer. xx 8. In this latter passage, Jeremiah has accused Yahweh of duping him. He is constantly proclaiming messages of destruction, but nothing happens. Therefore, everyone ridicules him and "the word of Yahweh has become a source of abuse" for him. It is not likely that the sense is that Jeremiah scorns and ridicules God's word "all the day," since the word itself has been a "joy and gladness" to him personally (cf. xv 16), even though his possession of it has caused him to become socially ostracized (cf. xv 17) and persecuted. It is the persecution about which he complains, not the receipt of God's word.

[65] Launcelot Brenton, trans. The Septuagint Version of the Old Testament and Apocrypha with an English Translation (London: Samuel Bagster & Sons, rpt. 1976), p. 910.

[66] Gerald Janzen, Studies in the Text of Jeremiah (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), p. 73.

[67] Cf. Jer. xix 4; xvi 18; xxxiii 4; Ezek. viii 17; xl 34, 35; Isa. vi 1; II Chron. v 14; vii 1, 2; etc.

[68] Cf. Jer. xlvi 12; li 5; II Kings vi 17; Isa. i 15 + 8x in Isaiah; Ezek. vii 23; ix 9; Joel ii 24; Ps. xxxiii 5 + 5x in the Psalms; Prov. xii 21; etc.

[69] There are several occurrences of the coincidence of מלא and חמה specifically which can be noted, although these are less helpful than the idea of endowment in the interpretation of this colon. In Isa. li 20, the "sons of Jerusalem" lie helpless and faint in the streets, "full of the wrath of the Lord, the rebuke of your God" (הַמְלֵאִים חֲמַת-יהוה גַּעֲרַת אֱלֹהָיִךְ). Here being filled with God's wrath is the result of judgment. Jeremiah does not perceive himself as the object of divine judgment either in this passage or in xv 17b. His is not a statement of complaint for being judged but one of lament concerning the burden of

his prophetic office. In Esther iii 5 and v 9, as noted above, Haman is described as "filled with rage" toward Mordecai. The anger in this case originates with Haman, which is not the case in Jer. vi 11 where the construct "wrath of Yahweh" is quite definite.

[70] "Word of Yahweh" is the best referent unless the third person singular pronouns in xx 9 are interpreted to refer to God himself rather than the דבר-יהוה of verse 8.

[71] Idcirco elsewhere in Jeremiah is used 11x to translate לכן and 5x to translate על-כן . This is its only occurrence without a specific referent in the MT of Jeremiah.

[72] Bright, p. 132, states that the "reference is either to Jeremiah's repeated threats of ruin, or (as in vi 7) his repeated denunciations of crimes committed against the helpless."

[73] Baumgartner, p. 64; and Artur Weiser, Das Buch des Propheten Jeremia, Das Alte Testament Deutsche, 6th ed., Nos. XX-XXI (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1969), p. 170. Weiser sees the phrase as a reference to Jeremiah personally but also to the national destruction.

[74] Friedrich Nötscher, Jeremias, Echterbibel, No. 2 (Wurzburg: Echter-Verlag, 1947), p. 71; Berridge, p. 154.

[75] Gerhard von Rad, "Die Konfessionen Jeremias," EvTh, 3 (1936), p. 271; Sheldon Blank, "The Confessions of Jeremiah and the Meaning of Prayer," HUCA, 21 (1948), pp. 346f.; and Chambers, p. 90.

[76] Cf. Jer. vi 7; Amos iii 10; Ezek. xlv 9; and Hab. i 3.

[77] See also Jer. viii 9; xi 10; xiii 10; xix 15; xxv 3, 5; xxix 19; xxxvii 2; etc.

[78] Cf. Pss. xlii 4, 11; lxxix 10; cxv 2; Mic. vii 10; Joel ii 17; Isa. v 19 for similar taunts.

[79] Theodore Henry Robinson, Prophecy and Prophets in Ancient Israel, 2nd ed. (London: Gerald Duckwork & Co., 1953), p. 137.

[80] Jer. ix 4 is difficult in the MT which reads הַעֲוֹת נִלְאוּ ("to commit iniquity they weary themselves"). As it stands, הַעֲוֹת is in the form of a Hiph. infinitive absolute which is the object of the verb נִלְאוּ but stands before it for emphasis. See Kautzsch, p. 340, and Carl Friedrich Keil, The Prophecy of Jeremiah, Biblical

Commentary of the Old Testament, trans. David Patrick and James Kennedy (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1873-74; rpt. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1964), p. 184. But although there is grammatical precedence for this, it is awkward, especially in the context of the first phrase in verse 5. Quite likely the consonants of this final phrase of verse 4 and the opening phrase of verse 5 should be redistributed and revocalized following the LXX to read הֵעֲרוּ נִלְאוּ שָׁב: ("they act iniquitously; they wear themselves out trying to turn"). Cf. BHS; Bright, pp. 67, 72; Nicholson, p. 91.

[81] Cf. Kautzsch, p. 350n., sec. 114.

[82] A suggestion: One idiomatic utilization of לאה is found in Ps. lxviii 10 where the land (God's inheritance) is described as "weary" (נַחֲלָתְךָ וְנִלְאָה) meaning "parched" as is evident from the reference to צחיחה in verse 7. This shade of meaning is somewhat appropriate in both vi 11a and xx 9c where the context is the description of the "heat" of God's word which is like a fire within the prophet. Thus: "I am parched by containing it." The land, however, is parched because it is lacking rain, whereas Jeremiah is not parched from lack of anything.

[83] BDB, p. 465.

[84] Cf. John xxi 25.

[85] Kimchi takes this latter group to refer to some kind of organized resistance movement of young men. He sees טוֹב and חָדָר as indications of the official nature of the group. But חָדָר seems to be a term indicating the general and inclusive nature of those who should hear. It is to be both children and young men--and everyone else within earshot.

[86] The Semitic root is Syriac ܟܠ ; Aramaic כול ; Arabic كلّ .

[87] Perhaps this is the reason for the transposition of the infinitive in the Vulg. rendering.

[88] BDB, pp. 407-8, lists 30x including those instances where the infinitive is implicit from a previous sentence, where it appears only with ל designating a person,and where it occurs with pronominal suffix.

[89] BDB, p. 407.

[90] Janzen, p. 31. Joseph Ziegler, Beiträge zur Ieremias-Septuaginta (Göttingen: Vandenboeck & Ruprecht, 1958), p. 88: "Verdeutlichende Wiedergabe aus stilistischen Gründen." In at least one instance, II Chron. ii 5 (verse 6 in LXX), φέρειν is used to render נשׂא Pilp. in LXX. LXX

reads: ". . . heavens do not bear his glory." MT reads: ". . . heavens cannot contain him." Cf. Zech. vi 13 in MT and LXX.

[1] E.g. Ernest W. Nicholson, The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah, chapters 1-25 (Cambridge: University Press, 1973), p. 23.

[2] Cf. Wilhelm Rudolph, Jeremia, Handbuch zum Alten Testament, XII, 2nd. ed. (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1958), p. 3. Rudolph analyzes the lines as: 5) 4+4+3; 7) 3+3+3; 8) 2+3; 9/10) 4+4, 2+2+2.

[3] Rudolph, pp. 9f. also includes verse 14 in his analysis of the poetry as follows: 14) 3+3; 15) 2+2(+2), 3+3, 3+3; 16) 3+3, 3+3; 17) 3 (s.u.), 3+3, 2+2; 18) 3+3, 2+2+2, 3+3; 19) 4+4.

[4] Peter K. D. Neumann, "Das Wort, das geschehen ist: Zum Problem der Wortempfangsterminologie in Jer 1-25," VT, 23 (1973), p. 187, includes ii 1-3 in this latter section as well.

[5] Solomon Mandelkern, Veteris Testamenti Concordantiae, 4th ed. corrected and supplemented by Moshe Henry Goshen-Gottstein and F. Margolin (Tel Aviv: Schockin Publishing House, 1978).

[6] Neumann, pp. 171-217.

[7] Neumann, pp. 172-73.

[8] Jeremiah is the first to use this phrase in the first person, a practice which is further employed in Zechariah (4x) and Ezekiel (41x).

[9] Walther Zimmerli, Ezechiel, Biblischer Kommentar (XIII), 2 vols. (Neukirchen: Neudirchener Verlag, 1959).

[10] Cf. especially Neumann, p. 176.

[11] Sigmund Mowinckel, "The 'Spirit' and the 'Word' in the Pre-exilic Reforming Prophets," JBL, 53 (1934), 214-15.

[12] Neumann, p. 183 says: "Das Wortereignis ist nicht mehr nur passives Widerfahrnes, sondern entwickelt sich im götlichmenschlichen Zwiegespräch."

[13] Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907 ed., rpt. 1968), p. 849. This reference will subsequently be listed in the text as BDB.

[14] Cf. also the same terminology in the lament of Job iii 11.

[15] 943 occurrences; cf. BDB, 393.

[16] See H. B. Huffmon, "The Treaty Background of Hebrew Yada ," BASOR, 181 (1966), pp. 31ff. But most commentators like J. L. Mays, Hosea, Old Testament Library (London: SCM Press, 1969), pp. 173, 175 read רָעִיתִיךָ with LXX and Pesh. Thus, "I care for you" or "It was I who pastured you."

[17] John MacLennan Berridge, Prophet, People, and the Word of Yahweh, Basel Studies of Theology, No. 4 (Zürich: EVZ-Verlag, 1970), p. 42.

[18] Georg Fohrer, History of Israelite Religion, trans. David E. Green (London: S.P.C.K., 1973), p. 299 says that Dtr. uses the verb בָּחַר as the technical term of election. If Jer. i has been refashioned by Dtr., which some suggest, why wasn't this changed?

[19] Cf. Num. xiv 4; II Kings xxiii 5; I Kings ii 35.

[20] The singular form appears an additional 18 times.

[21] Miniscules 62, 130, 311, 87, 91, 490, 567.

[22] Cf. Paul Volz, Der Prophet Jeremiah, 3rd ed. (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1930), p. 5; Wilhelm Rudolph, p. 5.

[23] Nicholson, p. 24.

[24] Elmer A. Leslie, Jeremiah (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1954), p. 22.

[25] Theodorus Christiaan Vriezen, An Outline of Old Testament Theology, trans. S. Neuijen (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, rpt. 1966 from 1958 ed.), p. 76.

[26] Berridge, p. 43.

[27] Carroll Stuhmueller, "The Theology of Vocation according to Jeremiah the Prophet," Bible Today, 58 (1972), 609-15, takes an entirely different line of reasoning in suggesting that Jer. i was written by Jeremiah at the very end of his life looking back over what he had learned about the meaning of his vocation. He sees the phrase as Jeremiah's affirmation that it was intended by God that he

go to the nations, but that he never accomplished this task. Stuhlmueller's interpretation is intriguing but depends on far too many unsubstantiated critical assumptions.

[28] As well as Ezekiel, cf. Ezek. iv 14; ix 8; xi 13; xxi 5; and Josh. vii 7; Judg. vi 22.

[29] H. Graf Reventlow, Liturgie und prophetisches Ich bei Jeremia (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1963), p. 48.

[30] William Holladay, "The Background of Jeremiah's Self-Understanding: Moses, Samuel, and Psalm 22," JBL, 83 (1964), 155. Ambrose of Milan (4th cent.) in de Off. Min. 1, 66: "Moyses et Hieremias, elect: a Domine, ut oracula Dei praedicarent populo, quod poterant per gratiam, excusabent per verecundiam."

[31] Nicholson, p. 25.

[32] Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, A Latin Dictionary (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879, rpt. 1975), p. 1486.

[33] ܥܘܠܡܐ being used for a child under 7 and ܛܠܝܐ referring to a youth up to age 25; cf. J. Payne Smith, ed., A Compendious Syriac Dictionary (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903, rpt. 1976), p. 174.

[34] Leslie, p. 22.

[35] John Skinner, Prophecy and Religion: Studies in the Life of Jeremiah (1922, rpt. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1961), p. 24n.

[36] Berridge, pp. 46ff.

[37] Against Rudolph, p. 6; and Artur Weiser, Das Buch des Propheten Jeremia, 6th ed., Das Alte Testament Deutsche, XX-XXI (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1969), p. 6.

[38] Cf. Holladay, "Jeremiah's Self-Understanding," p. 155; and Norman C. Habel, "The Form and Significance of the Call Narratives," ZAW, 77 (1965), 308. Berridge, p. 45 disputes this.

[39] Donald Hugh Wimmer, "Prophetic Experience in the Confessions of Jeremiah," Diss. University of Notre Dame 1973, pp. 213f.; BDB, p. 655.

[40] Wimmer, p. 213.

[41] Cf. Habel, p. 308.

[42] Jer. i 7, 9, 12, 14; iii 6, 11; xi 6, 9; xiii 6; xiv 11, 14; xv 1; xxiv 3.

[43] Cf. Rudolph, p. 6. This idea of coercion is frequent in the commentators. John Bright, Jeremiah, Anchor Bible (Garden City: Doubleday, 1965), p. 3, does not specifically comment on it, yet translates the verse in such a way that the rebuke and divine compulsion are emphasized: "Never say, 'I am only a boy'; For you'll go on what errands I send you/ And you'll say what I tell you to say." (Cf. also the NIV.)

[44] Bright, p. 5.

[45] See also I Sam. xv 18; I Kings ii 29.

[46] Berridge, p. 50. But Berridge's further suggestion that Jeremiah was acquainted with the terminology of Josh. i 16 and consciously adopted and adapted it (replacing עשׂה with דבר), is not a necessary conclusion.

[47] Cf. xiv 14, 15; xxiii 21, 32; xxix 9, 23, 31; xxvii 15; xxviii 15; xliii 2; also Num. xvi 29; Ezek. xiii 6; Neh. vi 12. Helge Weippert, Die Prosareden des Jeremiabuches, Beiheft zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, No. 132 (Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1973), p. 119.

[48] Ernest W. Nicholsen, Preaching to the Exiles: A Study of the Prose Tradition in the book of Jeremiah (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1970).

[49] Note that xxiii 21 is authenticated Jeremianic poetry.

[50] P. Broughton, "The Call of Jeremiah. The Relation of Deut. 18:9-22 to the Call of Jeremiah," ABR, 6 (1958), 37-46; Holladay, "Jeremiah's Self-Understanding," p. 155, 159-61; also in Holladay, Jeremiah: Spokesman Out of Time (Philadelphia: United Church Press, 1974), p. 26; Habel, p. 309; and R. Davidson, "Orthodoxy and the Prophetic Word. A Study in the Relationship between Jeremiah and Deuteronomy," VT, 14 (1964), 414-15.

[51] Again I am in agreement with Berridge, p. 50.

[52] Cf. Gen. xv 1; xlvi 3; Num. xxi 34; Deut. xxxi 8; Josh. viii 1; xi 6; II Kings xix 6; Isa. x 24; xli 10, 13; xliii 1, 5; xliv 2; Ps. xci 5; Prov. iii 25; Lam. iii 57; Dan. x 12; and many more. These are listed selectively to illustrate the breadth of distribution.

[53] Cf. Gen. xlvi 4; Deut. xxxi 8; Josh. i 5, 9; Judg. vi 16; Isa. xli 10; xliii 2, 5; Ps. xcv; etc. Again

references are selective to indicate distribution.

[54] Cf. i 9; xv 20; xxx 11; xlii 11.

[55] Berridge, p. 53.

[56] Berridge, p. 52; also Reventlow, pp. 53ff.

[57] Nicholson, Jeremiah: Chapters 1-25, p. 25.

[58] Erhard Gerstenberger, "Jeremiah's Complaints," JBL, 82 (1963), 399.

[59] Sigmund Mowinckel, "Der Ursprung der Bilaamsage," ZAW, 48 (1930), p. 265f., sees נְאֻם-יְהוָה as "whisper" and connects the formula with the "old seers." The classical prophets liked that association more than the association with ecstatic nabiism.

[60] So Bright, p. 153.

[61] Against Leslie, p. 22, who sees this as the "vision phase" of the call.

[62] Cf. Nicholson, p. 25; Berridge, p. 54.

[63] Stanley R. Hopper, "Jeremiah," Interpreter's Bible, Vol. V, ed. George A. Buttrick et. al. (New York: Abingdon Press, 1956), p.804.

[64] Habel, p. 309; cf. E. Kutsch, "Gideons Berufung und Alterbau Jdg 6,11-24," ThL, 81 (1956), 79.

[65] Mowinckel, "The 'Spirit' and the 'Word'," p. 207.

[66] Mowinckel, p. 200; also noted by Friedrich Giesebrecht, Die Berufsbegabung der alttestamentlichen Propheten (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1897), p. 142; and others.

[67] Mowinckel, p. 210.

[68] Mowinckel, p. 203.

[69] Cf. also the derogatory use of רוח in Hos. ix 7. Mowinckel, p. 206.

[70] Mowinckel, p. 212; cf. Johs. Pedersen, Israel, Its Life and Culture, I-II, trans. A Moller and A. Fausboll (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 121. See also Jer. v 14; xxxiii 29.

[71] Martin Buber, The Prophetic Faith, trans. Carlyle Witton-Davies (New York: Macmillan, 1949), p.164.

[72] Cf. Nicholson, Jeremiah: Chapters 1-25, p. 25; Habel, p. 309; Holladay, "Jeremiah's Self-Understanding," p. 155; etc.

[73] Berridge, p. 55.

[74] This contrasts directly with the words spoken by the false prophets, cf. Jer. xxiii 16, 21. Verse 16 contrasts what comes from the imagination of the false prophet with what comes from "the mouth of the Lord," and, in verse 21, God declares that he "did not speak to them, but they prophesied." Kimchi, who is again concerned about the exact phenomenon, explains that words are really heard through the ear rather than placed in the mouth but that "in the prophetic vision it appeared to him [Jeremiah] that God set a word in his mouth as a substance to be arranged by him in his mouth to speak by the articulation of the tongue."

[75] Cf. Gen. xxxix 4, 5; I Kings xi 28; II Kings xxv 22, 23; I Chron. xxvi 32.

[76] This phrase is found in the Sperber edition of the Targum, though it does not appear in מקראות גדולות .

[77] In addition xii 16, 17, also contain three of the verbal roots, and four other passages contain the final pair. See appendix for a complete chart of the verbal roots. Helge Weippert, Die Prosareden des Jeremiabuches, Beiheft zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, No. 132 (Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1973), pp. 193-202, has also collected much of this same data, though it is utilized somewhat differently than in the discussion on these pages. Where I have drawn on his material specifically, it is noted.

[78] Nicholson, Jeremiah: Chapters 1-25, p. 26, argues that, since these series occur elsewhere only in the prose, this supplies more evidence that the call was edited as an "anticipatory interpretation of the message of the prophet as presented in the book as a whole." R. Bach, "Bauen and Pflanzen," in Studien zur Theologie der alttestamentlichen Überlieferungen (von Rad Festschrift), eds. R. Rendtorff and K Koch (Neukirchen Krs. Moers: Neukirchener Verlag, 1961), p. 32n, also suggests that the series may have been an addition from the Babylonian period. D. Carl Heinrich Cornill, Das Buch Jeremia (Leipzig: C. Hinrichs, 1895), p. 111, and Volz, pp. 194-95, also argue a line of dependence from i 10 to xviii 7-10. Berridge, p. 62, sees Jer. i 10 as a "summarized and more succinct formulation of 18.7-10, adapted to fit into the call narrative . . ."

[79] John D. W. Watts, "Jeremiah--A Character Study," Review and Expositor, LVIII (1961), p. 432.

[80] Bach, p. 11n, discusses the grammatical construction of the verse, indicating that it is not at all clear that Jeremiah should be considered as the subject. He points out that פקד (H) generally does not appear with an infinitive (but note Josh. x 18). Furthermore, he concludes that the context suggests that at least indirectly Yahweh is the subject of the verbs. Certainly this latter point contains some truth but the simple sense of the verse seems far more clear and less problematic than Bach suggests.

[81] Rudolph, p. 4; Paul Volz, Studien zum Text des Jeremia (Leipzig: J. c. Hinrichs, 1920); Holladay, Spokesman Out of Time, p. 28; J. Gerald Janzen, Studies in the Text of Jeremiah (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), p.35.

[82] A haplography could easily have occurred inasmuch as the first three consonents of both infinitives are identical and the infinitives have such a similar meaning.

[83] Further study of all of the occurrences of בנה with either נתץ or הרס reveals that בנה is taken as the opposite of נתץ only in contexts where the referent is a specific structure of some kind (cf. Judg. vi 28-30; II Kings xxiii 13ff.; II Chron. xxxiii 3; Ezek. xxvi 12-14). On the other hand, בנה and הרס are opposites both in reference to structures (cf. Judg. vi 25, 26; I Kings xviii 30-32; Prov. xiv 1 though it is possible that this last example should be read figuratively) and to people or civilizations (cf. Ps. xxviii 5; Ezek. xxxvi 36; Mal. i 4; Jer. xxiv 6; xlii 10; xlv 4; also Isa. xlix 17 reading with ancient versions and the Dead Sea Scrolls). This would reenforce the argument that only הרס would be a truly appropriate choice for chiasmus here.

[84] Bright, p. 88 says that the passage "may be of anonymous--though not necessarily late--origin."

[85] In Job, the verbal root is נסך and in Psalms it is שׂרשׂ.

[86] Weippert, p. 199: Deut. vi 10f.; xx 5f.; xxviii 30; Josh. xxiv 13; II Sam. vii 10f.; Isa. v 2; lxv 21, 22; Jer. xxix 5, 28; xxxi 4f.; xxxv 7; Ezek. xxviii 26; xxxvi 36; Amos v 11; ix 14; Zeph. i 13; Eccl. ii 4; iii 2f.; I Chron. xvii 9f. Bach, p. 12 also connects and includes Amos ix 11, 15.

[87] Bach, pp. 15-23.

[88] Both Weippert, p. 200 and Bach, pp.24ff. discuss these occurrences in a detailed fashion.

[89] One further example is II Sam. vii 10f. which brings together both the "land" and the "royal" theological traditions, but עשׂה is employed in connection with the "house of David" rather than בנה .

[90] Bach, pp. 23ff.

[91] Bach, p. 28.

[92] Against Nicholson, Jeremiah: Chapters 1-25, p. 23, who attributes the final form of Jer. i to an exilic Deuteronomistic editor.

[93] With Berridge, p. 67.

[94] Weiser, p. 8; Skinner, p. 31; Rudolph, p. 9 favor a non-visionary experience. Bright, p. 5f., says that the exact nature of the experience is indeterminative.

[95] Hopper, p. 807, considers these descriptions as "dream-symbols, formulated by the unconscious act of Jeremiah's undoubted experience of the almighty through recurring springtide seasons from his boyhood on, precipitated into the conscious mind at that time when what was repressed in him came into conflict with that which he was called to become." Such psychological conjecture seems far more complex than is necessary to explain the phenomena of these verses.

[96] In i 13 Jeremiah's name is omitted. The LXX omits the name in i 11 as well, but this seems due to the influence of i 13.

[97] The pun as it is used here is very skillful, in that it is based not merely on word play, but on the corresponding meanings of the words as well. Comparison may be made with a simliar word play in Amos viii 1-3, which has many of the same contextual characteristics as Jer. i 11, 12 (e.g. a symbolic experience through which God reveals something of his intention to the prophet), but relies solely on the similar sounds of the words קַיִץ (summer fruit) and קֵץ (end) rather than on other cnaracteristics as well. Berridge, p. 67-68; Reventlow, p. 81, assert that the objects themselves are of no importance. I would agree that they are not of importance in the sense that Hyatt, p. 806, suggests when he states that "rod" symbolizes the "imminent judgment of Yahweh." But they are important in that certain qualities of the symbol relate directly to certain characteristics of the interpretation--certainly more so than in the word play example of Amos viii 2. 3. These are no mere "catchwords." In the Amos passage, קַיִץ and קֵץ are derivatives of distinctly different roots and the meaning of the first in no way reenforces the meaning of the second.

98 In Gen. xxx 37-41, Jacob took sticks from three varieties of trees including the לוּז, which is another name for the almond (cf. Syriac ܠܘܙ for שָׁקֵד here rather than the cognate ܫܩܕ). But even though we may assume that the sticks were fresh in this case, the text has no interest in the leaves or buds. Only the rod is being described. When BH speaks of branches on shoots which are flourishing, the words used are גֶּזַע (cf. Job xiv 8; Isa. xl 24; xi 1), חֹטֶר (Isa. xi 1), נֵצֶר (Isa. xi 1; lx 21), צֶמַח (cf. Isa. iv 2; Jer. xxiii 5--both figurative but referring to something obviously flourishing; also Gen. xix 25; Isa lxi 11, etc.), עָנָף (cf. Ezek. xvii 23; Lev. xxiii 40; etc.), יוֹנֵקֶת (Job xiv 7; Hos. xiv 7; Ezek. xvii 22).

99 H. Wheeler Robinson, The Cross in the Old Testament (London: SCM Press, 1960), p. 143.

100 Also Bright, p. 5. Leslie, p. 23, proposes a third understanding, namely that Jeremiah gazes at the spring beauty of the branch and reflects on the power which has brought a branch to full bloom. And Yahweh then speaks encouraging words to his timid, young prophet "pledging that his prophetic proclamation would be accompanied by divine power." While this interpretation contains some truth, it does not take into account the unique character of the almond-tree which gave rise to its name and, hence, the possibility of the pun.

101 The phrase הֵיטַבְתָּ לִרְאוֹת is an unusual one. The construction, however, is not uncommon (cf. I Sam. xvi 17; Isa. xxiii 16; Ezek. xxxiii 32; Ps. xxxiii 3), and the meaning seems to be "you have seen well/thoroughly," hence, "correctly."

102 Cf. also Jer. xliv 27.

103 Nicholson, p. 27.

104 LXX: διότο ἐγρήγορα ἐγὼ ἐπὶ τοὺς λόγους --"for I have been watchful over my words." The plural λόγους and the corresponding plural pronoun at the end of the verse are not attested in any of the other ancient versions and are perhaps the result of the influence of the plural "words" in verse 9. Vulgate: quia vigilabo ego super verbo meo --"for I will be vigilant over my word."

105 Targ.: אֲרֵי מוֹחֵי אֲנָא עַל פִּתְגָמִי --"For I am hurrying/pressing on concerning my word." Pesh.: ܐܪܝ ܡܗܢܦܢ ܐܢܐ ܥܠ ܡܠܬܝ --"for I am hastening concerning my word."

106 J. Philip Hyatt, "Jeremiah," Interpreter's Bible, vol. V, ed. George A. Buttrick, et. al. (New York: Abingdon Press, 1956), p. 807.

[107] John Bright, "The Book of Jeremiah: Its Structure, Its Problems and their Significance for the Interpreter," Int, 9 (1955), pp. 276-77; Reventlow, pp. 85-86.

[108] Neumann, pp. 183-84. Verses 4-12, he says, defines Jeremiah's "office," while vss. 13-19 defines his proclamation.

[109] Berridge, p. 67, says basically the same thing when he takes שְׁנִית as an indication of two examples of the same Gattung. Kimchi also makes a fairly lengthy comment to the same effect.

[110] Isa. liv 16 describes a "smith who blows the fire of coals" (חָרָשׁ נֹפֵחַ בְּאֵשׁ פֶּחָם), and Ezek. xxii 21 records God's declaration that he will "blow on you with the fire of my wrath" (וְנָפַחְתִּי עֲלֵיכֶם בְּאֵשׁ עֶבְרָתִי). It is likely that the participle of Jer. i 13 is a shortened form of an idiomatic phrase נָפוּחַ עָלֶיהָ בְאֵשׁ , which has been reduced to meet poetic requirements. The picture of a pot which has been set upon a fire is clearly the interpretation of the LXX which renders the phrase: λέβητα ὑποκαιόμενον ("a cauldron sitting on the fire"). (Note: as in verse 11, the LXX omits ἐγω ὁρω to translate אֲנִי רֹאֶה except in certain MSS of the Syrohexapla. There is no support from the other ancient versions for this omission.) Similarly, the Pesh. has صبصلا وِلاقا ("a pot which is set on"). The Vulg. interprets the phrase as a "boiling pot" (ollam succensam) using a word which can also mean "kindled or inflamed." But the Targum, as in the case of verse 11, moves directly to interpretation of the image by having Jeremiah respond, "I see a king who is boiling like a pot" (מַלַּךְ דְּרַתַּח כְּדוּד אֲנָא חָזֵי).

[111] Godfrey Rolles Driver, "Linguistic and Textual Problems: Jeremiah," JQR, 28 (1937-39), p. 97.

[112] Bright, Jeremiah, p. 5.

[113] Cf. Jer. iv 6; vi 1, 22; x 22; xiii 20; xv 12; xxv 9, 26; etc.

[114] Kimchi supports the idea that פתח here means "loosened/untied" by quoting Gen. xxiv 32 "he freed the camels." But he also says that it could mean "opening" as well "since the two meanings are close." Note Isa. v 27 for a further example of this idea of "releasing" or "unbinding."

[115] Leslie, p. 23; Robinson, p. 143.

[116] Targum.

[117] Hyatt, p. 808.

[118] For example: "to proclaim" cf. ii 2; iii 12; "to cry aloud" cf. iv 5; "to call upon" cf. vii 13, 27; "to name" cf. xx 3; xxiii 6; "to read" cf. xxix 29; xxxvi 6, 8; etc.

[119] The ancient versions recognize the specific use of קרא here by rendering it with an interesting variety of rather unusual words. LXX translates it with συγκαλῶ ("I am summoning together/calling to council") and this is the only time that this word is used in Jeremiah. (It appears 9 times to translate קרא (Q) in the O.T.) The Vulg. renders it with convocabo ("I am mustering/calling a meeting"), again a word used only once in Jeremiah. (See Ezek. xxxviii 21 for the only other use in the classical prophets.) Whereas the Targum focuses on the assembling aspect of קְרָא by rendering it with מְכַנֵּי ("calling together"), the Pesh. chooses military terminology: طف;(ل ("I am marshalling/calling for combat"). Kimchi is eager to explain how this "calling" takes place, and suggests that it is as if God is saying "I place it in their heart that they should come."

[120] Bright, Jeremiah, p. 4; BHS; Rudolph, p. 8. Rudolph suggests that the MT has been expanded from Jer. xxv 9. Janzen, p. 10, thinks that it ismore likely that the MT is a result of the conflation of two varient readings in i 15 in view of the synonymous and interchangeable character of the two words. He notes Jer. x 25 and Ps. xcvii 6 (though he must mean Ps. xcvi 7) to illustrate his lexicographical point.

[121] It might be suggested on the basis of Jer. xv 4, MT: לְכֹל מַמְלְכוּת הָאָרֶץ = LXX: πάσαις ταῖς βασιλείαις τῆς γῆς, that it is the LXX and not the MT which has been influenced by another passage in Jeremiah, and that Jer. i 15 in the LXX reflects an initial haplography which was then expanded on the basis of xv 4 as an equalization.

[122] It is interesting to note that מַמְלְכוּת is apparently not considered to be synonymous with גּוֹיִם, which, as I have indicated, is a synonym with מִשְׁפָּחוֹת in x. 25. In i 10; xviii 7, 9; xxvii 8; xxix 18, מַמְלְכוּת and גּוֹיִם (or their singulars) are used together apparently indicating different entities. Furthermore, in xxviii 8 מַמְלְכוּת is considered to be different than אֲרָצוֹת and in xxiv 1 it is apparently different than הָעַמִּים.

[123] Kimchi identifies the kingdoms as a part of the Babylonian Empire and indicates that there were a number of kings but that the great king was Nebuchadnezzar. Cf. Jer. lii 32.

[124] Bright, Jeremiah, p. 6, again follows the LXX which reads "kings," but rather than emending the text, he assumes that מַמְלְכוֹת has the meaning "kings" as "occasionally in Phoenician, and elsewhere in the Bible." This seems dubious.

[125] BDB, p. 490.

[126] See also II Kings xxv 1.

[127] Cf. iv 17; vi 3, 4; xii 9; xxv 9.

[128] Walter Baumgartner, "Die Klagedichte des Jeremia," Beihefte zur ZAW, 32 (Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann Verlag, 1917), p. 34; BDB, p. 181 sec. 3d.

[129] Hyatt, p. 809.

[130] See also xxxii 32 and xxxiii 5 for very similar phrases.

[131] Also xviii 8; xi 12, 14, 15, 17.

[132] E.g. i 16; ii 13, 17, 19; v 7, 19; ix 12; xvi 11 - twice; xvii 13 - twice; xviii 14f.; xix 4; xxii 9.

[133] Cf. i 16; vii 9; xix 4; xxxii 29; xliv 3, 5, 8, 15.

[134] Bright, p. 6.

[135] BDB, p. 883.

[136] Cf. xix 13; xxxii 29.

[137] See also xxxii 29 and xix 5.

[138] See xix 4 which expands this phrase.

[139] So Bright, p. 56; see also M. J. Dahood, Revista Biblica, 8 (1960), pp. 166-68, who argues that the goddess is Shapash.

[140] BDB, p. 1005.

[141] Textual note: Both the Vulg. and Pesh. indicate that "works" should be read as the singular מַעֲשֵׂה. Kimchi also reports that "there are books in which it is written למעשה with a 'heh' rather than a 'yôḏ.'" But Kimchi goes on to report that these other editions are in error "according to the Massoreh." There is no contextual or grammatical reason to read a singular here and both the LXX and Targ. witness to the plural as in the MT. It is likely that the Vulg. and Pesh. may both be influenced by one of

the inferior readings mentioned by Kimchi or by the singular forms of the phrase elsewhere.

[142] Berridge, p. 198; Reventlow, p. 58.

[143] One such Jeremianic element is the use of חתת (N) employed for word play in verse 17 rather than the usual ירא --see Berridge, p. 201.

[144] Kimchi also notes I Kings xviii 46 indicating that the phrase means "to go in a state of readiness."

[145] The term כְּגֶבֶר is used rather playfully since גֶּבֶר is a term which Job often uses of himself, cf. Job iii 3, 23; iv 17; x 5; etc. It should not be read as כְּגִבּוֹר in xxxviii 3, as the Pesh., Targ. and one MS suggest, and as Berridge, p. 199n, would want in order to support his supposition that preparation for battle is in view here.

[146] Weiser, p. 10. Rashi indicates that the meaning of the phrase is "to be vigilant like a soldier."

[147] Reventlow, p. 58, 61; Berridge, 199f.

[148] Berridge, p. 200.

[149] Cf. ii 27, 28; vi 4, 5; xxxi 6; plus five more times.

[150] Cf. xiii 4, 6; xviii 2.

[151] Verse 29: כִּי קוֹם יָקוּמוּ דְבָרַי עֲלֵיכֶם . . ."for surely my words will stand against you."

[152] E. Kautzsch and Wilhelm Gesenius, Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar, 2nd Eng. ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910; rpt. 1974), p. 321, sec. 109a: ". . . the jussive is especially found . . . to express a more or less definite desire that something should or should not happen . . ."

[153] Cf. Deut. i 21; xxxi 8; Josh. x 25; viii 1; I Chron. xxviii 20; xxii 13; II Chron. xx 15, 17; Jer. xxx 10; Ezek. ii 6; iii 9; etc.

[154] Joseph Ziegler, Beiträge zur Ieremias - Septuaginta (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1958), pp 88-89; Janzen, p. 30.

[155] Janzen, p. 96.

[156] Volz, Studien zum Text, p. 4. An analysis of the LXX does give more weight to Volz' argument than Janzen's summary dismissal warrants. φοβειν is also utilized twice to render חתת (N) in Jer. x 2 as well as in Josh. i 9 and

II Chron. xx 17. It is not entirely impossible, therefore, that the LXX is employing this common word simply for translation clarity. φοβειν is used to render a remarkable variety of words in Jeremiah including יָרֵא, רָעַשׁ, פחד (Q), חתת (N), and יָגוֹר.

157 I am assuming that this is a Niphal form, despite the classification of BDB, p. 369, which lists this and all similar occurrences as Qal forms. Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1958), p. 345, hereafter cited as KB, and Wilhelm Gesenius and Frants Buhl, Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament, 17th ed. (Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 1949), p. 269, also assume a Niphal form.

158 The root occurs as a verb approximately 52 times in the OT, 30 of which are in Isaiah (mostly in chapters i - xxxix) and Jeremiah.

159 Bright, Jeremiah, p. 116.

160 Bright, p. 4.

161 Cf. Berridge, 147n; Pierre E. Bonnard, Le Psautier Selon Jérémie (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1960), p. 34. William Holladay, "Style, Irony, and Authenticity in Jeremiah," JBL, 81 (1962), p. 46, cites the following examples of this stylistic device: xvii 14; xi 18; xv 19; xx 7; xxxi 4, 18. It is interesting to note that except for the examples in chapt. xxxi, all of these appear in those passages relating to Jeremiah's vocation and suffering.

162 BDB, p. 369.

163 Volz, Studien zum Text, p. 4.

164 Interestingly the word used to render חתת (H) in both the Pesh. and Targ. (ܒܗܬ in Pesh.; אֶחְפְּרִיָּה from root חבר in Targ.) is also used frequently to render Hebrew שׁבר (cf. Jer. x 19; xxiii 9; iv 20; xxx 12, 15) in passages referring to the prophet's later agony and to the plight of the people. This may indicate that Pesh. and Targ. understood there to be a relationship between God's admonition here and Jeremiah's later expressions of agony.

165 Leslie, p. 24.

166 Hyatt, p. 809.

167 In the ancient versions, there is even a greater difference in the renderings of i 18, 19 and xv 20 than the MT reflects, indicating that the versions did not assume a dependence between these verses. If they had seen a

dependence, some attempt at equalization should occur. For example, the MT uses the verb נתן in the first phrase of both i 18 and xv 20. But in the LXX, τιθημι is utilized in i 18, whereas διδωμι is utilized in xv 20 to render נתן . A similar variation may also be seen in the Vulg., Targ., and Pesh. with no attempt at equalization.

[168] Cf. Deut. xxviii 13; Isa. xlii 24; Gen. xvii 6, 20; Num. v 21; etc.

[169] Cf. similar uses of הַיּוֹם in Jer. xlii 19, 21; xliv 2. Used without a modifying preposition, הַיּוֹם is rare in Jeremiah and always refers to a specific day rather than to a general time frame. The LXX pleonastically renders הַיּוֹם as ἐν τῇ σήμερον ἡμέρα . Janzen, p. 30, indicates that this represents a Hebrew Vorlage היום הזה , although certainly more is involved with the expansion than that, since in verse 10 היום הזה is rendered simply as σήμερον. It seems likely that the LXX should be regarded as a secondary development. The Targ. renders הַיּוֹם here as יוֹמָא דֵּין , but Alexander Sperber, ed., The Bible in Aramaic, Vol. IVB (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973), p. 108, indicates that this is the usual stylistic time expression in Targum Jonathan.

[170] Cf. I Sam. vi 18; II Kings x 2; xvii 9; xviii 8; Josh. xix 29, 35; Ps. cviii 11; etc.

[171] Cf. Jer. iv 5; v 17; viii 14; xxxiv 7. This final passage lists Jerusalem, Lachish, and Azekah as the only remaining fortified cities in Judah by about 588 B.C.

[172] Jer. vi 27 also makes use of the word מְבֻצָּר in a context in which God is establishing Jeremiah in a particular role. Again note the use of נתן : בָּחוֹן נְתַתִּיךָ בְּעַמִּי מְבֻצָּר וְחֹרֵץ וּבָחַנְתָּ אֶת-דַּרְכָּם: . But it is not at all certain what this sentence means as may be demonstrated in the interpretation of the ancient versions. BHS (Rudolph) takes מבצר as a gloss on בָּחוֹן which is perhaps being confused with בַּחַן ("watchtower"), and, therefore, wants to delete it. (So also Bright, Jeremiah, p. 49.) Koehler and Baumgartner suggest that מבצר be vocalized as מְבַצֵּר and given the meaning "one who searches through," i.e. "a tester." In this case the gloss on בָּחוֹן would be a correct one. RSV follows this line. NIV has translated the line: "I have made you a tester of metal and my people the ore," presumably emending מבצר to מֶחְצָר or the like. This enables sense to be made out of "bronze and iron" in verse 28. But Bright, p. 49, states that "possibly all three words were drawn secondarily from i 18." While some connection between i 18 and vi 27 can be seen, vi 27 must for the moment remain a confusion, the unraveling of which is fortunately unnecessary for a clear understanding of i 18.

[173] Janzen, p. 119, states that the present form may be a haplography from ולעמוד but it is far easier to posit a simple transposition.

[174] The wall of a city is typically referred to in the singular in BH as in II Kings xiv 13 חוֹמַת יְרוּשָׁלַם , although occasionally the plural is also found as in Neh. ii 13, cf. ii 8 where the singular is employed.

[175] Francis S. North, "Textual Variants in the Hebrew Bible Significant for Critical Analysis," JQR, XLVII (1956), p. 78.

[176] North, p. 78.

[177] This is the only occurrence of the phrase "pillar of iron" in the OT, although Jer. lii 17 and elsewhere speak of the "bronze pillars" of the Temple. Furthermore, this is the only instance where עַמּוּד is used figuratively in reference to a person.

[178] Cf. iv 9; viii 1; xxvi 11, 12, 16; xxiv 10; xxvii 2; xliv 21; etc.

[179] In xxvi 12ff., five men who are designated שָׂרִים are pictured as officials working within the king's house with the liberty to advise the king. These are not "princes" and, since one is described as a "scribe," they seem to have a variety of functions. In xxxviii 25ff., it is clear that Zedekiah looks upon the שָׂרִים as a very powerful group, and elsewhere (as in xxxvii 15) they exercise great authority. In Jer. xxvi 10ff., the שָׂרִים appear to have a position within the house of the king which is something equivalent to the stature of the priests in the Temple. In Jer. xli 11, 16 (and elsewhere), the שָׂרִים have responsibility for the command of the military forces. Thus we see that those designated as שָׂרִים had a variety of functions, but all were extremely influential and exercised authority within the governmental sphere.

[180] Cf. William McKane, Prophets and Wise Men, Studies in Biblical Theology, No. 44 (London: SCM Press, 1965).

[181] Janzen, pp. 35-36.

[182] Bright, p. 6.

[183] Bright, pp. 264, 369.

[184] Cf. xxxiv 1, 7, 22; xxxviii 10; etc.

[185] Both Rashi and Kimchi find this to be a perfectly adequate interpretation. Both quote the Targ. without

further comment.

[186] Nicholson, Jeremiah: Chapters 1-25, p. 27.

[187] BDB, pp. 407-8 lists 30 instances where the infinitive is implicit from a previous sentence (it is possible that this is the case here, cf. II Kings xvi 5), where it appears only with designating a person (as here), or where it occurs with pronominal suffix.

[188] LXX and Pesh. read the verbs as singular.

[189] This statement may also simply be read as "I cannot endure," thus relating to what immediately precedes.

[190] Georg Fohrer, Introduction to the Old Testament, trans. David Green (London: SPCK; Nashville: Abingdon, 1970), p. 395, sees verse 21 as a later addition because of the "expansion" character.

Chapter VII: THE INTENTION OF THE SELF-DISCLOSURES

[1] Cf. John MacLennan Berridge, Prophet, People, and the Word of Yahweh, Basel Studies of Theology, No. 4 (Zürich: EVZ-Verlag, 1970), but also the early form-critical work of Walter Baugartner, Die Klagedichte des Jeremia, BZAW, No. 32 (Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann Verlag, 1917).

[2] Against H. Graf Reventlow, Liturgie und prophetishes Ich bei Jeremia (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1963).

[3] Against Erhard Gerstenberger, "Jeremiah's Complaints: Observations on Jer. 15.10-21," JBL, 82 (1963), 393-408.

[4] Berridge, pp. 157-168.

[5] N. Schmidt, "Jeremiah," Encyclopedia Biblica (London: A. & C. Block, 1901), pp. 2388-91; etc.

[6] Donald Hugh Wimmer, "Prophetic Experience in the Confessions of Jeremiah," Diss. University of Notre Dame, 1973, p. 111, in his study which attempts to locate the "I" of the confessions, concludes that the "I" is always that of a prophet. Jeremiah's personal suffering as a man is inseparable from his role as a prophet.

[7] Shalom Paul, "Literary and Ideological Echoes of Jeremiah in Deutero-Isaiah," Proceedings of the Fifth World Congress of Jewish Studies (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1969), pp. 102-20, traces numerous connections between Jeremiah and II Isaiah, concluding that Jeremiah's writings were a "very important source for literary creativity" for this later prophet. He notes that this influence has been observed as early as Saadia Gaon, who is cited by ibn Ezra in his comment on Isa. lii 13 as saying that "the whole chapter is referring to Jeremiah." Cf. also Sheldon Blank, Prophetic Faith in Isaiah (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1958), pp. 100-103; Otto Eissfeldt, The Old Testament: An Introduction, trans. Peter R. Ackroyd (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p. 17; H. H. Rowley, The Servant of the Lord and Other Essays on the Old Testament, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965), pp. 1-93.

[8] Sheldon Blank, "The Confessions of Jeremiah and the Meaning of Prayer," HUCA, 21 (1948), 331-54.

[9] Cf. my review of the pertinent literature in Chapter I of this study. Of particular note are the works of Ewald,

Duhm, Volz, and Skinner, although not all of these were convinced that his material had a public intent.

[10] Cf. Georg Fohrer, Introduction to the Old Testament, trans. David Green (London: S.P.C.K., 1970), p. 395; J. Kenneth Kuntz, The People of Ancient Israel: An Introduction to Old Testament Literature, History, and Thought (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), p. 349.

[11] W. V. Chambers, "The Confessions of Jeremiah: A Study in Prophetic Ambivalence," Diss. Vanderbilt University, 1972, p. 122.

[12] Berridge, p. 159.

[13] Wimmer, pp. 83-89.

[14] Hans Walter Wolff, "Prophecy from the Eighth through the Fifth Century," trans. W. Sibley Towner, Int, 32 (1978), 28-29.

[15] Cf. Luke xi 47: "Woe to you! for you build tombs for the prophets, and it was your forefathers who killed them." (Also Matt. xxiii 29-31 for an expanded account.) Those who bring the word of reproof to one generation and are despised, are lauded by the next.

[16] Chambers, pp. 108-11.

[17] Fohrer, p. 402.

[18] W. F. Albright, From Stone Age to Christianity, 2nd ed. (Garden City, N.J.: Doubleday, 1957), p. 232.

[19] H. H. Rowley, "The Nature of Prophecy in the Light of Recent Study," HTR, 38 (1945), p. 38.

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